PRESENT PERILS IN RELIGION

ALBERT EDWARD DAY

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By
ALBERT EDWARD DAY

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To E. R. D.
Partner of Toil

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FOREWORD

FRANKLY, this is a book of sermons. It has all the limitations, but, the writer hopes, at least some of the values belonging to that type of literature.

It is not just a *collection* of sermons, however. It is a *series* devoted to one central theme—the search for reality in religion and the present hindrances that lie in the path of discovery. So vast a theme cannot be discussed adequately in one or many sermons. But the preacher has tried to put into this book some suggestions which may be helpful to those who are engaged in this unending quest, and he urges the gentle reader to suspend final judgment until the last page is reached and all the suggestions have had a chance at his mind and heart.

These sermons were preached at Christ Church in the autumn of 1927 and are now offered to the public because of the enthusiastic reception given to them by this discriminating congregation and because of a desire, often expressed by many who heard them, that the messages herein contained might be available, not only for their own continued meditation, but for the benefit of a wider public.

With gratitude to this church, whose interest and support made these and other utterances possible, and to my former congregation at First Church, Canton, Ohio, whose faith and love are a blessed memory, and to Elizabeth M. Lee, my capable associate, whose assistance in the preparation of the manuscript for the press has been invaluable, this book is committed to the keeping of Him whose unworthy messenger I am.

ALBERT EDWARD DAY.

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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It is proper that an expression of appreciation should be extended to Doubleday, Doran & Company for the privilege of a free use of Moffatt's translation of the New Testament text.

CHAPTER I

ORTHODOXY

I learned that in order truly to find God in the world to-day . . . we must realize that he is never completely contained in any particular experience. He is so great that he is greater than all his revelations, greater than the Bible, greater than the church, greater than the human Jesus. There is no place where God has revealed himself where you can stop and say, "All of God is here."—*W. A. Brown* (*Life of Prayer in a World of Science*, page 24).[1]

"Each age adds a word thereto, some psalm or promise sweet,
And the canon is unfinished and forever incomplete.
O'er the chapters that are written long and lovingly we pore—
But the best is yet unwritten, for we grow from more to more."

—*Sam Walter Foss.*[2]

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[1] Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

[2] *Songs of the Average Man*, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., publishers. Used by permission.

CHAPTER I

ORTHODOXY

TEXT: "We know God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this fellow comes from."—*John 9. 29* (Moffatt).

HERE is an ancestral orthodoxy challenged by a living heresy. The exponents of Mosaic law are confronted by a disciple of Jesus. A man, blind from birth, for the first time by the healing touch of Jesus has been given the glorious boon of sight. His night has become day. No more pitiful groping along the wall, no more dependence upon the guidance of some patient hand, no more confinement in the prison house of darkness! Fear has been supplanted by security, gloom by gladness, perpetual blackness by the radiance of sun and flower and the faces of friends. What greater evidence did he need that God was in Jesus than his own recovery from the plague of blindness? But the Pharisees would not be convinced. They felt keenly the contradictions between what Jesus was teaching and what had been taught them about Moses. They had had the teachings of Moses a long

time. Those teachings were surrounded by tender racial memories and sanctioned by the approval of their great men of history. Why not cling to the old and tried rather than venture out into something new? So they stormed at this disciple of the Galilæan heretic; "We know God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this fellow comes from."

I have a keen sympathy for those Pharisees. They were defending a precious treasure. The Mosaic doctrine and teaching were of too great value to be relinquished lightly. We know to-day even better than the Pharisees how great that value was. Mosaic monotheism is one of the greatest religious achievements of the race. The ethics summed up in the Ten Commandments are still the bed rock of the moral life of civilization. The hygienic and social importance of much of the code which is familiarly known as Mosaic is still a source of marvel to students who compare it with earlier and later products of lawgivers and legislative assemblies. Well might the religious leaders of Judæa be anxious about this precious heritage from their past. It had demonstrated its worth. Their failure lay in their inability to recognize the worth that was operating before their very eyes. In their devotion to an inherited good they were dulled

to the appeal of the incarnate goodness of Jesus. In their appreciation of the achievements strung along the road of a great past they were rendered insensitive to the meaning of an achievement that had just taken place on the streets of their own town. Clinging to the phrases and forms which tradition ascribed to Moses, they refused to see how Jesus fulfilled all the suggestions and meanings of these old terminologies and that in accepting him they were not losing Moses but understanding Moses and gaining that at which the old lawgiver but dimly grasped and receiving that which the son of Hur could not, but the son of Mary and the Son of God could give them.

I

Orthodoxy in any age can never be understood by those who rate it as mere stubbornness. The "die-hards" in politics or in religion or in any other sphere of life are often men who are "dying" to preserve something which has proven itself very precious. We all recall with something of merriment the protests that arose when heresies in female habits began to appear—bobbed hair and cosmetics and common-sense dress. Perhaps we participated in the protest—and now we wonder why.

Well, it was not just a mere fear of something new; it was the sense of something very lovely and very sacred in womanhood which meant so much to us and which we were loathe to lose. Anything which seemed to threaten its destruction promptly got on our nerves. If we had not cared so much for the glories of womanhood, we would have cared less about her change in habits.

The same qualms appear in the realm of politics. It is perfectly distressing to see how easily our people can be persuaded of the relation of certain American societies and leaders of public opinion to the Soviet government in Russia. How readily we fling the word "red" at each other and how terribly it sticks! But it is a perfectly comprehensible phenomenon. Americans love America! "Your flag and my flag, your land and my land"—what nobler themes for playwright's drama and orator's eloquence and poet's song! The moment any one proposes a change in the institutions which make our land the abode of peace and our flag the symbol of liberty, we become nervous lest some exceedingly precious treasure shall perish in the revision, we repudiate with vehemence the advocates of change and cling with tenacity to that with which our memories are associated.

And, of course, the same panic will arise in the realm of religion; only more quickly because of the more intimate character of all true religion. The men who are speaking and writing with such earnestness in behalf of the doctrine of the virgin birth are for the most part aroused by a real fear that something may happen to impair the place which Christ occupies in the minds of men and by their determination that all the character-transformation and soul-comfort which they have found in him shall be preserved to their children and their children's children. The reluctance which makes many unwilling to submit the Bible even to that ordinary historical examination which we give to all important books coming to us out of a long past, and which insists that it is "all or nothing," is, again, a testimony to the inspiration and consolation which the book has brought to them and a result of genuine anxiety lest a single element of its great human value be lost.

Orthodoxy, when intelligently conceived and honestly urged, bears witness to something which every thoughtful person is bound to respect. It is evidence of an apprehension of worth, of a seriousness of outlook upon life, of loyalty to discovered facts and of concern for the future. It is the guardian of the past and

the keen critic of proposed reforms and would-be saviours. It compels every new hypothesis in science and every new proposition in philosophy and every new statement of religious faith and every new concept in morals to justify itself at the bar of intelligence. It prevents haste and often avoids waste. It is an antidote to too frequent shifting of loyalties and makes for stability in school and church and state. All this must be said, and much more might be said, in an effort to appraise properly the contribution of intelligent orthodoxy to life. We need conservative minds in every human organization. A church, even a liberal church, which does not extend to them genuine hospitality, listen with respect to their opinions, give them a place in its councils, and make them feel its ungrudging appreciation, is as foolish as a sea captain who scorns ballast and sails out to sea without charts or any other reminders of the way which his predecessors have found good.

II

But if orthodoxy has its values, it has its dangers too. As an attitude it is worthy of respect; as an inveterate habit of mind it is as perilous as most habits are.

1. It so often results in false emphasis.

Sidney Smith once said, "Ten thousand men have been burned at the stake on account of a proposition, a form of words, which to-day we realize was without meaning." I cannot vouch for the numerical accuracy of the number of funeral pyres thus lighted by the orthodox torch but history's unimpeachable testimony is that the reason for those bonfires of human flesh was correctly stated. Men who thought they were defending the true faith were in reality only raising a hubbub about the preservation of certain forms in which the faith had come down to them. Having drunk from the old oaken bucket of childhood, they have denounced and imprisoned and killed the plumber who would equip the house of modern life with a system of sanitary water pipes. They were afraid lest the water should fail when they most wanted it or perhaps should not be as pure as they imagined it was when they saw it sparkling in the moss-covered bucket that came dripping from the dark depths of the old family well. As far as water is concerned, we have a more constant supply than we ever had in the days of individual wells. They sometimes went dry! We have a purer supply than we could possibly have had under the old system; typhoid fever from drinking water has practically disappeared from our

midst. Quite as irrational are many of the fears expressed by present-day orthodoxy. Men who are insisting upon new forms of expression for our faith are as much concerned in preserving the freshness and purity of the faith as any of the rest of us. They are only awakening to the possibility of error and evil in the moss-covered vessels and uncovered wells of yesterday's theology and are eager to bring our terminology into harmony with scientific discovery in order that it may serve as the means of bringing to the minds of inquiring youth the ministries of religion, untainted by those discarded errors which are the poison of the mind and which every intelligent person fears quite as much as he fears a drink from unprotected wayside wells. There are earnest Christians who are restudying and rephrasing the doctrine of the incarnation and the doctrine of inspiration and the doctrine of immortality. The result is new statements as different from the old as our modern drinking fountains are different from the iron-bound buckets of our fathers' day. It is easy to become alarmed in the presence of these new phraseologies and to raise a hue and cry about the destruction of faith. But the man who goes to the wall and turns the knob of the drinking fountain in one of our

modern office buildings finds that he is not playing with a plumber's toy but is tapping an inexhaustible supply of cool, refreshing water. And the man who comes to some of these restatements of religion not to belabor their authors but to search out their meanings, finds that he is not playing with a theological toy, but is tapping streams whose source is in the inexhaustible lakes of the eternal truth. His thirst is quenched and his soul revived; vigor returns to tired limbs and solace enters aching heart and he takes up again with a song the burden of life's long road. One could scarcely find books where old forms are more completely done away than in Doctor Fosdick's *Modern Use of the Bible* or in Doctor Quick's *Liberalism, Modernism, and Tradition*, but these and others like them have been the occasion of spiritual rebirth to thousands who by them have come to a new appreciation of the uniqueness of Jesus and the regenerating power of the Divine Spirit. One preacher bears humble testimony concerning these reinterpretations that he read with a passion of interest which increased with every chapter, that an awe came upon his soul which was not far removed from that which possessed the seer of Patmos and that he saw under different forms what John so vividly has described

in beautiful symbol in the opening chapters of the Apocalypse; "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. . . . And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. . . . And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." It is just the possibility of such experiences which the habit of orthodoxy is apt to miss and to make others miss.

The forms of faith must change to keep pace with the change in historic and scientific outlook, else faith cannot speak to the intelligence of to-day. The old doctrine of the person of Jesus hinged upon the affirmation that he was of "like substance" with God the Father. One of our church councils had a furious debate as to whether he was of "like substance" or of the "same substance" with the Father. Philosophy has ceased to think in terms of substance altogether. It now thinks

in terms of activity. "A thing is what it does" —that is an aphorism of the philosophical mind of to-day. If you try to come to that mind with your evaluation of Jesus in terms of substance, you speak in a foreign tongue. If you say that Jesus is of the same substance with God the Father, you will make no impression; but if you say that in Jesus is an activity which you can think of only as Divine, you are talking in intelligible terms. You have not surrendered a thing that is vital. You have only given your faith a vehicle by which it can successfully approach the modern mind. In its eagerness to preserve values orthodoxy has often insisted upon forms which have ceased to be valuable and by its very insistence has prevented a living faith from finding a living expression and therefore from communicating itself to others. It is the essence of faith, and not the terminology of faith, which needs defense and propagation.

2. The mistaken emphasis into which orthodoxy is sometimes betrayed manifests itself in other directions.

(*a*) It fastens the attention upon certain material events which tradition has connected with revelation rather than upon the character of the revelation itself. I had a very vivid illustration of that in a startling experience in

my ministry to one of my congregations. I was attempting to help a little group of people, who were above the average in general intelligence, to an intelligent faith. They were speaking right out of their inmost hearts the things that troubled them and were asking questions very freely. What do you suppose those questions were? I doubt whether you could ever guess! Not about God, nor the problem of pain, nor the hope of immortality, nor Christ's ability to make men new; but whether Elijah went to heaven in a literal chariot of fire; whether the song which the shepherds heard was the result of sound waves striking upon the ear drum and set in motion by the throats of angels who were suspended 'twixt earth and sky; whether it was a literal dove with feathers that descended upon the head of Jesus at his baptism—and so on. It was almost unbelievable and for a moment I sat in a perfect daze at such a revelation of mental distortion in the name of religion. Why should anybody bother himself with such matters? Did you ever hear of anyone whose life was transformed by an inquiry into facts so material and so utterly devoid of saving power? The important question is not Elijah's chariot, but his character—a character so sublime that it made the men of his day sure

that death could not touch him but that he simply moved out and on to be with God; not the vibration of the air on the plains of Bethlehem but the vibration in human hearts wherever the name of Jesus is mentioned; not whether a dove descended upon Jesus but whether the Holy Spirit of God possessed him at the very outset of his ministry and remained with him all through those blessed months of human service. In its effort to preserve values, orthodoxy needs beware lest it seize only the temporal husks and permit the eternal truth to escape.

(*b*) Orthodoxy has often exhausted its solicitude upon opinion rather than conduct. "After all," says a shrewd writer, "if you can induce a man seriously to follow the teachings and example of Jesus, he will not go far wrong however inadequate his theology may be. He is far more likely to go wrong if encouraged by a nominal orthodoxy to believe in the deity of our Lord in such a way that the imperative need to follow in the footsteps of his manhood tends to be overlooked."[1] Now, that is just what has happened again and again. In attempting to defend what they have believed to be a true theology of our Lord's person, men have entirely overlooked his ethics. He

[1] Quick, *Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition*, p. 20.

has been a Person to be argued about rather than a Way to be walked. Some of the most orthodox men I have ever known, as far as their opinions were concerned, were the most unorthodox as far as their daily lives were concerned. The searching and profound precepts of Jesus and the more searching and profound spirit of Jesus had never touched them. They laid a theological wreath upon his brow, but they never really crowned him Lord of their lives. Jesus never said, "I am an opinion," but, "I am the way;" never, "I am a theology," but, "I am the truth;" never, "I am a worthy subject of liturgy," but, "I am the life."

(*c*) Orthodoxy has often rested its case with tradition rather than fact. When men are fighting for a heritage from the past there is always danger that they shall not give a proper place to the living present and to its suggestions and its evidences. Jealous of the testimony of yesterday, they acquire a certain deafness to the witness of to-day. If not very careful, they develop a positive fear of fact and confuse their fear with faith. Orthodoxy needs to keep in mind Bishop Temple's fine words, "If we are frightened at any kind of knowledge, it means that we have not really staked our lives on the belief that this world

is God's world." If we cannot squarely face the facts about the Old Testament, we have not real faith in God. If we cannot face the discoveries of science, we have not real faith in God. But, if we believe in a God who is greater than any chronicle, we are not going to be disturbed by the faults of the chronicle. If we believe in a God who is before all things, and in whom all things consist, we welcome every fact of science as a new revelation of him. The surest proof of the reality of our faith is the warmth of hospitality we give to facts from whatever source they may come.

3. Finally, orthodoxy is often so held as to be a real foe of the creative life. "During the Renaissance men discovered that a certain Roman named Petruvius had laid down certain canons of orthodoxy, correctness, and propriety, and this became to them a gospel of architecture. Modern scholars have discovered that Petruvius was not an architect at all, but just a literary gentleman with an atrociously obscure style who chatted about architecture. But he was set up as an evangelist, infallible for all times. Nothing that could not be read therein or proved thereby was henceforward to be orthodox architecturally."[1]

[1]Hearnshaw, *Mediæval Contributions to Modern Civilization*, p. 163.

And what was the result? Architecture was killed. "Art is life, not revival." The same thing may be said of religion; it is life, not a revival. When the religion of yesterday was alive, it created its own forms. We should revere those forms as the expression of a life but to make them the rigid rule for to-day and to-morrow is to stifle life. The spirit of man must be free from slavish obedience to old canons if it is to live creatively in religion as in every other sphere.

Orthodoxy needs a rebaptism of the spirit of Robinson of Leyden, who was constantly looking for new light to break forth from the old Word; or of E. Stanley Jones, who is willing to trust Jesus to the Hindu mind and to trust the Hindu mind with Jesus, refusing to fasten upon the East our creeds and ecclesiasticisms but, believing that Jesus is the light of all souls that accept him, gives franchise to the Eastern soul to write out its own theology of Jesus and evolve its own ecclesiastical forms for the protection of the life which Jesus sets free; or of Richard Watson Gilder, who, facing the fears of those who mourned and the sneers of those who celebrated the passing of Christ, wrote:

> "Ah no! If the Christ you mean
> Shall pass from this time, this scene,

These hearts, these lives of ours,
'Tis but as the summer flowers
Pass but return again
To gladden the world of men.
. . . . . .
Behold him now where he comes:
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
But the Lord of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs,
. . . . . .
'Tis He as none other can
Makes free the spirit of man."[1]

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[1] Richard Watson Gilder, *The Passing of Christ.* Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers. Used by permission.

CHAPTER II
HERESY

Let me assure you that some of us can discern already in this hard sorrow which has come to you great profit, not only to the intellectual life of all branches of the Christian Church, but to the world through the revelations to it of the spirit of Christ; especially its extension into that field where it is too often grievously lacking—theological discussion. —*Frederick Palmer to Algernon S. Crapsey* (after his trial as a heretic).[1]

No one can deny that, taken as a whole, Christian people do not know to what their faith commits them. . . . We have the liberal type, intent upon applications of the faith, certain that Christianity is a matter of character and conduct, yet for the lack of anchorage to principles getting hopelessly at sea, losing all sense of a special vocation in the world, and at last settling down to the ethic of being agreeable, reliable, and kind as the all-sufficient confession of Christianity.—*W. E. Orchard* (*The Outlook for Religion*, p. 214).

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[1]Reprinted from *The Last of the Heretics*, by A. S. Crapsey, by and with permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knapp, Inc., authorized publishers.

CHAPTER II

HERESY

TEXT: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."—*Acts 24. 14, 15, 16.*

HERE is heresy at its best. It is profound; it has plumbed the depths and has found God. It is reverent: God is not merely a fact to be argued about, but a Being to adore; "so worship I God." It is humble; it does not imagine that it has discovered the real God for the first time in history, but frankly says, "I worship the God of my fathers." It recognizes the continuity of all genuine religious experience, and so affirms its faith in the moral and religious reality unveiled in "the law and the prophets." It has the long, long look: there is about it none of the *carpe-diem* philosophy of the shallow-minded who say lightly that one world is quite enough, but, rather, does it

avow, "I have hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead." And finally it recognizes the unimpeachable claim of the ethical life. "Herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Here is something which all true men are bound to honor.

But it is heresy, nevertheless. It challenges accepted doctrines and familiar practices. It stands for Christ as against Caiaphas, for liberty of faith as against out-worn restrictions of the Mosaic code, for salvation by attitude rather than by ceremony, for the individual against the institution, for progress rather than fixity, for the future rather than the past. One has only to read this man's letter to know at how many points which his contemporaries considered vital he relentlessly challenged prevalent opinions in religion. His loyalty to great fundamental realities did not blind him to the falsehoods and half-truths and empty forms and crippling restrictions which the leaders of the established religion fervently but mistakenly believed to be both real and fundamental. And he refused to compromise. He would not make Christianity just a fresh patch on the tattered garments of Judaism. He demanded a new statement and a new program and he finally secured both.

Christianity will forever be his debtor. After the establishment of new religious frontiers by Jesus, there fell upon the early church well-defined timidities, a tendency to withdraw toward old positions, to effect a *rapprochement* between law and gospel and to impose such legal practices upon the members of the new church as would make them more acceptable to members of the synagogue. If James and the little coterie in Jerusalem had had their way, the church of the first century would have degenerated into a narrow sect utterly incapable of any approach to the world that was to be increasingly Gentile. It was Paul and his solid, uncompromising "heresy" that saved the church as an organized protagonist of the larger heresy which began with Jesus and which ultimately shook, not merely a little section, but the whole Roman Empire and which within three centuries became the religion of Cæsar and the orthodoxy of the vast domain over which proud imperial banners floated and throughout which marching legions with shining spears and flashing shields imposed the imperial will.

I

In an advertisement of some publishing house I saw the other day the notice of a book

entitled *The Church's Debt to Heretics.* It ought to be a fascinating book. Jesus and Paul and Savonarola and the Waldensians and Wycliff and Huss and Luther and Wesley and Bowne were all heretics, denounced and, in some cases, excommunicated and done to death by the orthodoxies of their day. But later generations have "gathered up their scattered ashes in history's golden urn" and, if acceptance has not been given to all that they pleaded for, they have been recognized as the true guardians of the Spirit who kept alive in the midst of general decay those faiths and hopes without which true religion perishes. A book which tells their story embodies the very romance of Christianity in its struggle against foes without and within, its days of peril and near collapse, its final victory in areas of thought where defeat seemed almost sure.

1. Often it has been the heretics who have perceived the real meanings of old phrases, have felt the real life enshrouded in old form, have discovered forgotten emphases in ancient creeds and have, in a most genuine way, released the potencies and fulfilled the promises of ancestral codes. Jesus fulfilled Moses; Paul preserved the universality and freedom of Jesus; the Waldensians and Wycliff and Huss and Luther were each more truly the spiritual

descendants of Jesus and Paul than the official religions of their day. Wesley recovered the meaning of the Reformation for England and America, and men like Bowne brought to the veins of the children of Wesley fresh transfusions of blood which have been the health and strength of every church which has been fortunate enough to receive it. A professor in one of our theological seminaries has a lecture in which he attempts to ask and answer the question, "Was John Wesley a Modernist?" A much more interesting question than that could be asked, "Is the Modernist a true Wesleyan?" If anyone started to prepare a lecture on that theme, he might discover to his surprise that many who are branded as heretics to-day more truly incarnate the spirit of the illustrious founder of Methodism than those who have been in such haste to condemn. Some of us have no doubt where John Wesley, if he were alive, would stand in the whole struggle 'twixt old systems and the living Word. At any rate, a calm review of the centuries will show our profound debt to the heretics as the real defenders of the faith whose eternal meanings were utterly missed by the many whose orthodoxy made it impossible for them to grasp the heart of the issue.

2. It must be recognized, too, that heretics

have been not merely the instruments in the hand of God for the rescue of the essential and the eternal and the real from the accidental and the temporary and the formal elements of religion but they have been the pioneers who have led the race to the discovery of new truths and to the experience of new aspects of reality. The history of civilization is the history of the pioneer. I do not mean that all its movements have been forward or that all its heroes have been explorers. I do not mean, even, that everything that uses the adjective "civilized" is necessarily the register of a true social advance. But this I mean: if we take, in the broadest sense, the history of civilization as the story of man's emergence from the clod, of his successive rebirths to a larger life in the spirit, of the evolution of laws and institutions which embody and preserve that spirit and give it fuller expression, then the history of civilization is the story of heretics. Before old insufficiencies could be done away new sufficiencies had to be born and be championed and be victorious. And the new is always heresy. Someone claims to have dug up a record of the Lancaster, Ohio, school board back in 1828. In the record there is an account of a proposed debate as to whether railroads are practical or not. The minutes of the board

run as follows: "You are welcome to use the schoolroom to debate all proper questions in, but such things as railroads and telegraphs are impossibilities and rank infidelities. There is nothing in the Word of God about the telegraph and if God had designed that his intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour by steam, he would have foretold it through his holy prophets. It is a device of Satan to lead immortal souls down into hell." The story of locomotion and electrical communication is the story of every new idea and every new device which threatens the comfortable and profitable regime of the familiar. The new is always a heresy. It is a stranger which seems to have no claim on our hospitality, a disturber of the peace, an idea with no power back of it save its own inherent vigor. It can quote no authorities, give no references, appeal to no precedents. There it stands on the threshold saying, "You do not know me; you have never seen me; but I have come to save you, to show you a better way, to lead you to a larger life." And as it stands there, so strange, so unfriended, so alone, we are tempted either to ridicule it or turn the key against it or to call for the police. But wisdom counsels us to heed the words of the Scripture, "Be not

forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." It is always possible that that which we would repulse because of its strangeness is the very angel of God to our generation.

3. Therefore, I would plead for heretics to-day as I pleaded for the orthodox last Sunday. They frequently save for us both the past and the future. Without heresy there will be no progress; and we need progress. We have not yet plumbed all "the depths of the riches both of the knowledge and the love of God," nor grasped the meaning of "the breadth and length and depth and height" of which Paul wrote so long ago, nor discovered and applied all the truth which Jesus said would make us free. Such discoveries are not mass discoveries. They do not come like the flash of an electric light which floods the whole room. Rather are they, always, the lighting of a candle here and there by some lonely soul in his closet of prayer and meditation. When that soul fares forth into the house of life, men may extinguish the candle which he holds aloft or they may light their own torches by it. If the former, darkness resumes its reign; if the latter, soon all the house is ablaze and men will walk in the light as he is in the light. The church which expels all of

its heretics is likely to blow out some candle which God has lighted in its midst. The church which silences all its heretics is putting some light under a bushel. In either case, it is preferring darkness rather than light and its deed is evil. The only possible justification for the summary treatment of every heresy would be that the church has all the truth in its final form. No church has that nor will have it, until that far day when we shall know as we are known. To date we have only crossed the Jordan and barely set foot in our land of promise. Let us be careful how we treat those who remind us

"There is no bourne, no ultimate, the very farthest star
But rims a sea of other stars, that stretches just as far;
There's no beginning and no end; as in the ages gone—
The greatest joy of joys shall be the joy of going on."[1]

II

But heresy has its perils. It is not always profound and reverent, and humble, and far-seeing, and dedicated to righteousness as was the heresy of Saint Paul. The very things it

[1] *Songs of the Average Man*, Sam Walter Foss. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., publishers. Used by permission.

must do in order to accomplish its mission lead it, for some reason, to do the things which it has no right to do.

1. Sometimes it has been only a negative and destructive force in the church. The necessity which is upon it to deny certain errors seems frequently to have a hypnotic effect, fastening its attention upon the denial and causing it to forget that it ought to make some very vigorous affirmations. Salvation never comes to an individual or an institution or a people by mere negations. It is not what people do not believe that transforms character but what they do believe. It is not what they repudiate that inspires social regeneration but what they avow. Let a man prove to his own satisfaction that the world was not created in six days by a divine energy that ceased working on the seventh; he has done nothing to put meaning into the world as it is. Let him loudly deny (if he is so foolish) the virgin birth; he has done nothing to promote the new birth which multitudes so terribly need. Let him repudiate an everlasting hell; his repudiation will not make an end of the earthly hells which are consuming the virtue of womanhood and blasting the honor of manhood and blighting the promise of childhood. Thomas Carlyle came in life to a period of utter nega-

tion. When he stripped the universe of false notions he seemed to have nothing left. The universe was all void of life, of purpose, of volition, even of hostility. Having lost all tidings of another world, he wandered wearily through this one. It seemed a "vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha and mill of death." He was in the grip of the Everlasting No. He had no pillar of cloud by day and no pillar of fire by night to guide him. His soul was drowning "in a quagmire of disgust." Negation *is* damnation. Better leave a man with his idols than give him no deities to love and cling to. Better let him paddle through life on some discredited, leaky intellectual raft than blow up the only thing that keeps him afloat and fail to provide him with planks and nails with which to construct a sturdier boat. Mr. Carlyle refused to abide with negation. "Thus had the Everlasting No pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my being, and then it was that my whole Me stood up in native, God-created majesty and with emphasis recorded its protest. It is from this hour I incline to date my spiritual new birth, perhaps directly thereupon began to be a man." Manhood comes by affirmation and religion comes by affirmation, and regeneration, whether of the individual or the society, comes by

affirmation and anything that inclines us to submit to mere negation and stop there is the sly devil that would entrap us in a hell of everlasting nullity.

2. Last Sunday I pleaded for a recognition on the part of orthodoxy of the necessity of a restatement of faith in the light of the historic and scientific outlook of our own day. This morning I want to point out the perils connected with such a restatement.

(*a*) There is always danger of too great emphasis upon simplicity. Men say the old creeds and confessions were too complicated. They want some statement that is easily understood. I happen to remember that Thomas Paine also "abhorred mystery, liked daylight and common sense and the surface of things," and that he said that religion cannot have any connection with mystery. "He believed in man, the honesty of man, the future of man, the rights of man, and, above all, he performed the superb logical feat of believing in Thomas Paine. After that, who could call him a skeptic?"[1] But in spite of it, his biographer says that there was not an atom of religion in him. Of course not! Deny mystery and religion perishes. We do not

[1] Gamaliel Bradford, *Bare Souls*, p. 66. Harper & Brothers, publishers. Used by permission.

worship that which we understand. Faith and knowledge are not synonymous. Faith is born when, in the presence of the universe whose secrets we cannot fathom, we fling ourselves into the Everlasting Arms. Religion is not an affair of simplicity; it is the answer of the soul to great complexities! And we need beware lest in the desire to avoid needless obscurities we force a simplicity upon the world which is unreal. The world is not simple—it is very complex. It cannot be described in neat formulas which can be understood in a hurried reading in a crowded street car. At a lecture the other night Dr. James Snowden asked Bertrand Russell two questions: "Do you understand Einstein's theory of relativity? Do you go with him all the way?" Like a flash the great mathematician replied, "I answer the first question in the negative; the second in the affirmative." He did not understand, yet he accepted. It is the height of absurdity to demand that everything be brought within the range of an individual understanding. Religion deals with the Infinite and the Infinite can never be made simple to the finite. If our restatements of faith exclude all that cannot be easily fathomed by a hurried public, they will exclude very much with which religion must deal.

(*b*) There is danger of carelessness in our restatement of faith. It is quite too easy to assume that because a thing is new it is true; that because it speaks in modern language it speaks reality; that because it uses scientific terminology it is, in fact, scientific. Every orthodoxy was at one time a heresy; but the reverse is not true, that every heresy has become an orthodoxy. Passing by the world of science, one needs only to read church history to be convinced of that. Just to call the roll of the great heresies which have assailed Christianity would consume more time than we can spare this morning and would be the utterance of names of which most of us have never heard. Many of these heretics were noble-minded men and their movements were in the interest of intellectual integrity and of a larger life, but their heresies perished because they were mistaken. In the face of such a long testimony the liberal needs to look well to his propositions and to bring to bear upon them every test of truth which we know, intuition, consistency, workableness, universality. Heresy may be as false as the orthodoxy which it combats. It will be unless it moves with all the caution and humility which characterize the scientist in his laborious quest.

(*c*) Having rephrased his conception of cer-

tain great values, the liberal sometimes inclines to stop there instead of going on to possess those values in a living, personal experience and thus being able to offer to contemporary life, not merely a new description, but a testimony. Not long ago there sat in my study a minister from another State. He has held some prominent pulpits, has been a member of important church boards and carried on some significant missions for the churches in other lands. He is a liberal, but a man deeply concerned about the decay of the spiritual life in many of our churches. He was talking with great frankness. He said, "There are only one or two to whom I can feel that I can talk out my heart; somehow I freeze up when I try to discuss this matter with others." Then after a pause he said, "Day, the liberals of our day have nothing but words." Well, words are important; but they may be as devoid of regenerating power as the index of the Congressional Library. Of what value is it to redefine God, if we do not know God; to evolve a new theory of Bible manuscripts, if we do not get into them and get their values into us; to be able to state our theology of Christ in modern terms if we do not appropriate Christ for all our life in this modern world? What the world is crying for, and what the world

needs when it doesn't cry for it, is life, and too often it must be said of us:

"We plucked down all his altars, not to make
The small praise greater, but the great praise less,
We sealed all fountains where the soul could slake
Its thirst and weariness.
Love was too small, too human to be found
In that transcendent source whence love was born;
We talked of 'forces'; heaven was crowned
With philosophic thorn."[1]

An excessive and exclusive devotion to phraseology and creed do "seal up the everlasting fountains" and "crown heaven with a philosophic thorn." What the religious liberals all over the land need is an experience such as that which inspired Alfred Noyes to write in his "Resurrection"

"Once more I hear the everlasting sea
Breathing beneath the mountains' fragrant breast,
Come unto Me, come unto Me,
And I will give you rest."[2]

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[1] "Resurrection." Reprinted by permission from *Collected Poems*, Vol. II, by Alfred Noyes. Copyright, 1910, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

[2] "Resurrection." Reprinted by permission from *Collected Poems*, Vol. II, by Alfred Noyes. Copyright, 1910, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

A heresy that is only an excursion into terminologies and hypotheses is suspect; the whole world will listen when the heretic rediscovers Christ and brings him into the midst of our troubled times to say as he did so long ago, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(*d*) Finally, heresy sometimes allows itself to become a fomenter of strife and division. In its attack upon error, it often fails to distinguish between error and those who are victimized by it and it becomes personal. Or finding itself assailed by the champions of orthodoxy, it becomes bitter and vindictive. When that happens, the heretic has lost the very thing he is battling for—religion. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." Where love is, God is and where love is not, God is not. The greatest injury done to the churches is not by those who unwisely cling to outworn creeds nor by those who advance foolish, ill-considered revisions but by those who permit to die in their own hearts, and who destroy in others, that love which is the hope of the kingdom of God and the brotherhood of man. Whether we be conservative or liberal, let us love one another "with pure hearts, fervently"; let us love "not in words or in tongue but in deed and in truth."

CHAPTER III

INSTITUTIONALISM

Unless you have inwardly felt the need of salvation and have learned to hunger and thirst after spiritual unity and self-possession, all the rest of religious insight is to you a sealed book. And unless in moments of peace, of illumination, of hope, of devotion, of inward vision, you have seemed to feel the presence of your Deliverer, unless it has sometimes seemed to you as if the way to the home land of the spirit were opened to your sight by a revelation as from the divine, unless this privilege has been yours, the way to a higher growth in insight will be slow and uncertain to you.—*Josiah Royce, Sources of Religious Insight*, p. 33.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of Trustees Lake Forest University.

CHAPTER III

INSTITUTIONALISM

TEXT: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."—*Mark 2. 27.*

AN institution existing for the enlargement of human life had in practice often been used as an instrument for the limitation of life. It is a very dull soul which is not stirred by the story of the Hebrew Sabbath. Rest days were not unknown even among primitive people. On such days public gatherings were forbidden, lights were extinguished, songs and dances and loud noises prohibited, abstinence from food required. But those days were irregular, born out of crises, and often prescribed for fear of attracting the attention of unwelcome ghosts by conspicuous activity or as a means of propitiating gods who were flattered by human idleness or because certain days were unlucky and any labor then performed was sure to come to naught—reasons which make no appeal to the modern mind. The Hebrew and his religious genius took this institution which he inherited from the past and made it, not the irregular child of crises but a regular weekly practice, sanctified it as

the token of God's covenant relation with his people, as a memorial of God's power as creator and his love as a redeemer from Egyptian bondage, as a pledge of the peace to which they should come in the life everlasting and as a means of the enrichment of life here. At its best, it was a day of joy and light. The refreshment and comfort and renewal which it provided is beautifully summarized in that hymn from Hebrew liturgy:

"Treasure of heart for the broken people,
Gift of new soul for the souls distressed,
Soother of sighs for the prisoned spirit—
The Sabbath of rest;
This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,
A Sabbath of rest."

But this institution at times actually added to instead of lifting the burdens of humanity. It became master instead of the servant of life and its mastery was often dull and callous and dumb. Devised to liberate men from the bondage of toil and routine, it entangled them with the laborious routine of its own multiplied regulations and observances. It compelled men to suffer rather than seek the relief which involved no more toil than the application of medicines. It refused the simplest call of hunger and rebuked the disciples of Jesus

because as they went through the wheat fields they plucked the bearded grain, crushed it between their hands and thus appeased their bodily need. It crowned ceremony and disenfranchised the spirit. It belabored society with such a multitude of prohibitions that the real value of the day was lost from sight. Sabbath observance became an obstacle to the expression of brotherly love; Sabbath piety, an enemy of true godliness. In a word, the institution was actually defeating itself, destroying that which it was created to cherish and cherishing that which it was created to destroy. It needed an original religious soul like Jesus to challenge it to a rediscovery of its own genius, to save it from its own perversions and to restore it to its true place as a minister to physical and moral and spiritual health.

I

Religious institutions are always a menace; so are all others for that matter. But we shall find our time quite sufficiently occupied with those which have to do with religion and must therefore leave the others with their friends—and their critics.

1. Common sense requires the admission that religious institutions are inevitable. Religious persons are social persons. The herd instinct

drives them together. Assaults upon their common faith compel them to ally their forces for defense. Eagerness to make their common ideals regnant in the world demands that they organize for preaching and teaching and the creation of literature. Unwilling to permit their personal discoveries of God to pass into dust with them, they write confessions and institute symbols and evolve an organization which shall perpetuate these records of experience and foster their rebirth unto all generations. I have heard men debate whether Jesus ever intended to establish a church such as we have to-day, with its boards and secretaries and paid pastors and magnificent buildings and elaborate sacraments and stated sermons and stately liturgies and weekly magazines and all the machinery that has preempted to itself the name which in the beginning was applied to a group whose only bond was their love of Christ and whose only activity was witnessing for him. To me the debate seems utterly beside the point. Whether Jesus had any intentions one way or the other, we may not be able to pronounce a final judgment. We only know that such an institution was inevitable. A man like Jesus could not walk into the midst of a world troubled, defeated, hungry for life, homesick for God, and say what he

said and do what he did for the men and women who knew him and not have an institution grow up about him seeking to preserve forever that glimpse of heavenly day which he let loose upon our human darkness and doubt. Man being what he is, Christ being what he was and is and evermore shall be, the institution which we call the church simply had to come into being.

2. Candor compels us to recognize that the institution has performed an inestimable service both to the individual and to society. Its creeds and its ritual and its hymnology are the sacred deposit of centuries of search after reality, more valuable to the spiritual life of the race than the mineral deposits of our land are to the industrial and commercial life of our people. Through the church, easy access has been provided to unlimited spiritual treasures, to a vast endowment of truth and experience which has made possible activities and adventures utterly beyond the capacity of any generation dependent upon its own resources alone. The church has been the great teacher illuminating the minds of men on matters of faith of which otherwise they must have remained in profoundest ignorance. The church has been the mother of reformers. As the accumulated treasures of the Louvre have

been the inspiration of many new departures in sculpture and painting, so the accumulated insights of the church have been the stimulus which has thrust men out to new ventures of faith and to new combats with hoary wrong. The church has been a great disciplinary force throughout the centuries. Kings have stood barefoot in the snow at her door in penitence at her rebukes. The most ardent Protestant, if just, must recognize the moral control over multitudes achieved and often helpfully wielded by the Roman confessional and the Roman system of penance. Protestantism has discarded such machinery but it has exercised from its pulpits a moral power which statesmen and historians have been glad to acknowledge. There are many failures that must be recorded when one seeks to appraise honestly the moral influence of the church. It has, as yet, been unable to halt international slaughter, to Christianize industry, to secure brotherhood among the races, to moralize the use of property. Many church members think like pagans and spend their money like pagans and exercise political and industrial power like pagans. At a hearing the other day before the State Board of Pardons, the bank wrecker whose case was under review, was described by those opposed to any leniency as "a consistent and

persistent church attendant, where he clutched the sacred Book in one hand and with the other placed his pilfered gold upon the platter." One who is candid must confess that the church has not always succeeded with her attempts at the complete moralization of life, but he is not pressing language beyond its legitimate significance when he affirms that a world without a church would have been incalculably less moral than it has been with such an institution. And, last but not least, the church has provided an organization whereby men and women, eager to serve humanity, have found an opportunity to do for bodies and minds across the world what they could never have done as benevolent individuals.

3. Nor does it seem likely that religion will ever cease to develop and to be developed by institutions. Baron Von Hügel in his essay on "Progress in Religion" looks forward to a time when men will acquire the capacity for greater sensitiveness which, when at work, can replace the constraints of the past ages with a spontaneous acceptance of the great objective realities on the higher levels of life. But he hastens to avow, "None the less, men will, after this change as before, require the corporate experience and manifestation of religion as a permanent necessity for the vigorous life

of religion," and he declares that "men are under obligation to, even while they keenly combat, all and every religious institution." The other day I received from a scientific engineer a letter which I prize very highly, but in it there is let loose an idea which is more or less prevalent in certain sections of society and which cannot pass without challenge. He says: "I believe the preaching system is outgrown and should be replaced. In the old days when scarcely any of the congregation could read, it must have been very worth while to have someone familiar with the Scriptures read and expound them to the people; but now, when everyone reads and has his own ideas, of what use is it to put so much time and energy and capital into having preachers expound their ideas so *inefficiently?*" We shall have to confess that that adverb is a fair characterization of many pulpit expositions. But it were quite as foolish to attempt to provide an educated citizenship by dispensing with the public-school system and depending upon each individual to find truth for himself as to hope to promote genuine religion by tearing down churches and dismissing preachers and dispensing with Bible schools and trusting each newborn child to climb unaided the world's "great

altar stairs that slope through darkness up to God."

II

But these various values, inherent in religious institutions, give rise to the phenomenon known as institutionalism—the affirmation of the authority and sacredness of established institutions of the church. Appreciation easily becomes veneration and veneration passes over into uninquiring submission. Hence arise grave difficulty and danger. It is one thing to recognize the value of an institution and quite another to invest it with sacredness. One need have no hesitation in cherishing an instrument which the race has found effective: he needs to beware, however, of setting that instrument in the place of authority. Institutions are a necessity; institutionalism is a nuisance.

1. It tends to perpetuate what is no longer useful. The second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," is more than an ancient prohibition of idolatry. It is an ever-present reminder of the peril of yielding our reverence to any but God himself. When we extend our homage to any thing which at any time has been to our fellow men or to ourselves the means whereby they or we have been reminded of God or have

been able to apprehend God more clearly, we are always in danger of persuading ourselves that there is a necessary and inescapable connection between that thing and God and the final result often is that we conclude that God cannot be found apart from it and that, whenever we have it, we have God. But that is not so. No thing is ever more than a suggestion of God and is valuable only so long as it actually does suggest him. Once in my life I knelt in a Catholic church before a crucifix and felt myself in the presence of God. It was in war-torn France. As a chaplain in the army, stowed away for a time in a chateau which had been turned into an officers' barracks, denied all privacy, my soul trampled by the horrors of war and by a queer synthesis of too much strange humanity with an aching loneliness for those I loved, with no books and none of the normal ministries to the life of the spirit, I found refuge one dreary afternoon in a beautiful little wayside chapel. Not another person was present. As I looked toward the high altar and saw there the image of One whose heart was pierced by the sorrows of the world, something reached out of the infinite spaces from which that Redeemer came and caught hold of my soul and I kneeled in the presence of Him who was mediated to me

by that image of wood and stone. But if that crucifix had become an institution in my life, it would not be a mediator but a barrier between my soul and God, for the conditions that made it a religious value have passed from my life forever, I think. To gaze at it now is to be conscious only of a piece of wood and to be seized with a sense of distortion and barrenness. I get a better contact with God through the quiet glory of dawn creating the earth anew or the radiant splendor of star-lit night; among the hills, blue against the evening skies, bewitched beneath the moonlight or transfigured in the hush of the new-born morn; or in the radiant sunset, transforming the dark clouds into faint-seen banners of gold and scarlet dipping and rising afar as if carried in some triumphant procession that moves about the throne of the King of kings.

Institutionalism in its attempt to standardize man's contact with God is often betrayed into the perpetuation of instruments and agencies which once had but have since lost the power to effect such a contact and, by insisting upon the eternal sacredness of that which once was the occasion of a very sacred experience, keeps men from that which in a changed intellectual environment is really capable of securing for humanity a "divine moment." Protestantism

has no crucifix, but it still maintains ordinances and meetings and rubrics which, though once the effective means of bringing earth and heaven together, have long since ceased to have any such mediatorial power and are so much wood offered to men's veneration and use. Some of the most spiritual ministers as well as the most earnest laymen in America are crying for deliverance from them.

2. Institutionalism is the foe of genuine, personal religion. It tends to describe righteousness in terms of obedience to rule and to define faith as the acceptance of dogma. For, of course, if a thing is vested with authority and sacredness, there is no other course open to those who want to be right. To be a Christian is to agree with the church's definitions and to submit to its laws. One of the preachers in a very prominent pulpit in one of our great cities, preaching a sermon some time ago on Sabbath observance, made his final appeal to keep the Sabbath "because God said we should, and it is our business to obey." Another urged baptism, not because of its value as a symbol, but because to be baptized was an act of obedience. From that attitude, it is not a long step to a demand for conformity to rules which the church itself has devised and to contentment with such conformity. How many

Methodists used to measure themselves and everybody else by a certain familiar paragraph in their book of *Discipline*, we all know. Perhaps we have not thought how many in all churches there are who feel sure that "when the roll is called up yonder" they will be there because their names are contained as acceptable on the roll that is annually counted in imposing ecclesiastical reports. Doctor Fosdick was forced out of the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church because he could not accept "in toto" the Westminster Confession. I have in my possession a letter from a prominent minister which describes as enemies of the faith those who are seeking other definitions of reality than those offered by the church. All of these incidents are illustrations of institutionalism at work and none is a sample of true religion.

Obedience and righteousness are not synonymous, not even if it is obedience to God, any more than washed hands are cleanliness when soap and water have been applied simply to keep square with parental authority. A boy is cleanly when he has fallen out with dirt and fallen in love with cleanliness; and a man is righteous only when he has broken with evil and has come to value righteousness for its own sake and would live it even if no

external authority enjoined him to do so. Neither are faith and acceptance interchangeable words. John Oman, of England, in his stirring book on *Grace and Personality*, declares: "Upon us all is the right and duty to determine our belief solely by the witness of reality. In the strictest sense, we should not even try to believe, for we have no right to believe anything we can avoid believing, granting we give it entire freedom to convince us. Strictly speaking, also, we have no right to exhort people to believe, and much of that very common type of exhortation is mere distrust of faith and disregard of veracity which leaves earnest people with a painful and a confused idea that faith is a self-maintained sense of nervous tension."[1] Genuine faith is a conviction that arises spontaneously when something commends itself to the mind as truth. It cannot be imposed from without, nor worked up from within. It is a state of soul begotten by first-hand experience with reality. Take up your Bible and read that elegy of faith, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: "Now faith means . . . convinced of what we do not see. . . . It was by faith that Abraham obeyed his call. . . . It was by faith that Moses *was hidden*

[1] Page 142. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

. . . because *they saw* . . . and had no fear of the royal decree. . . . It was by faith that he left Egypt . . . like one who saw the King Invisible, he never flinched" (Moffatt's Translation). In every case faith was not the acceptance of an institution; it was a defiance of institutionalized custom and practice in the name of an original personal insight and experience which inspired confidence. Abraham had a call! Nobody else heard it; it was his alone, a voice to him from Eternal Reality. The parents of Moses *saw* and so "were not afraid of the royal decree;" Moses himself "*saw* the King Invisible" and feared not the wrath of the visible king. Faith is not the attitude of the subservient who meekly accepts catechetical definitions prescribed by the church; it is the heritage of the hero who ventures forth into life on an original personal quest of God, and who somewhere on the path of the world finds him and ever thereafter walks among men with quiet eyes and with the calm confidence that affirms, "I know in Whom I have believed."

Institutionalism, therefore, often becomes an enemy of the soul because it does not urge men to that inquiry into the meaning of conduct or to that search for immediate personal contact with reality which are the invariable

prerequisites of a genuinely moral and religious life.

3. Institutionalism at times gives rise to that unfortunate mental pattern known as the institutional mind. Several years ago a successful pastor was elected to a position as secretary of one of the boards of his church. One of his colleagues was asked how he fared in this new position. The reply was rather significant: "Well, he has developed a serious board complex. Whenever any program is suggested that in any way affects his organization, he seems to be unable to consider it calmly with reference to the larger good but appraises it solely from the standpoint of its effect upon the institution to which he is attached and from which he draws his salary." We all know what happened at Lausanne. There were assembled representatives from all Christendom save the Roman Catholic Church. They all spoke the name of Christ and all expressed a desire that his badly sundered disciples might become one, yet they could not and they would not unite in partaking of the bread and the wine in memory of his love for them and for all mankind. And why? The institution to which they belong had so thwarted their normal human reactions to their Lord and to each other that more important than

the unified testimony to their loyalty to Christ and their love for each other was the tenacious clinging to certain philosophical and theological presuppositions about the sacrament which their institutions advocated and around which they were built. I wonder if the wounds of Christ did not break out afresh after such a spectacle!

The world is amazed at the waste and folly of denominational competition; at the spectacle of a half dozen church buildings and church organizations in small communities where there is room for only one; at the perpetuation of American sectarianism on the mission fields. The reason for it all lies not merely in the intensity with which the individual person here and there clings to the tenets of his own denomination, nor in the difficulty of questions of property settlement and of the mechanical adjustment of the organizations involved, nor even in a certain reverence for the founders and the great struggles through which they passed and the brave testimony they bore; but in the perversion of mind which has so cursed many officials that they are unable to look at the religious situation with frankness and with a passion for the larger good but are forever returning to guard the institution with whose sacredness and

authority they are still impressed, seeing everything either as its friend or foe rather than as a possible minister to a fuller life for humanity.

Finally, it has been heartbreaking to see how institutions have sometimes prevented their spokesmen from espousing some great interests of humanity. A church official was talking not long ago about certain policies which one of the Boards of his church had proclaimed in the interest of humanity. He said: "I am afraid that this is an unwise policy. We are alienating our wealthy givers. You can see what has happened to our collections." There was no debate as to the moral value or the spiritual necessity of the policy then advocated. There was consideration only of its effect upon the treasury and therefore upon the resources of the institution. It is that unhappy devotion to the institution which has here and there made it possible for men to say with more truth than it is pleasant to contemplate: "The church has ceased to be the pillar of cloud and fire which leads its membership along the road of social conquest and has become a weak and inefficient ambulance brigade which picks up the wreck and ruin of an inhuman and unchristian social order."

Institutions are made for man and, whatever name they bear, are truly Christian only

so long as they actually serve humanity by making possible for all who come under their influence that larger life which is the foretaste of the life Eternal.

CHAPTER IV
INDIVIDUALISM

In most ages, so tragic a parody of human hopes are human institutions, there have been some who have loved mankind, while hating almost everything that men have done or made. . . . He [Luther] preaches a selfless charity, but recoils with horror from every institution by which an attempt has been made to give it a concrete expression.—*R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 96.[1]

Christ has used the church and spoken through her in spite of her stupidity and sin. Some of your comrades found the truth in her and loved her. To some she brought the strength to suffer. . . . Crippled, tortured, crucified as she is, she has the root of the matter in her. . . . She knows her weakness, and that means much.—*G. Studdert Kennedy, The Hardest Part*, p. 151.

Democratic religion in the full sense of that term begins when it first dawns on a man that God may have something to say to him through the different thing he is saying to his neighbor.—*W. A. Brown, Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy*, p. 98.

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[1] Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers. Used by permission.

CHAPTER IV

INDIVIDUALISM

TEXT: "Do not stop him; no one who performs any miracle in my name will be ready to speak evil of me. He who is not against us is for us."—*Mark 9. 40, 41* (Moffatt).

IN an article appearing in *The Survey* about a year ago, Professor Hart affirmed that since the Great War we Americans have revived some of our great primitive fears, notably, the fear of nonconforming individuals. Whether that fear ever disappeared is a matter of question. It certainly has had a long history. It early thrust itself into the life of the Christian group. On one of their missions John and one or two of the other disciples had come upon a man who was casting out devils and doing it in the name of Jesus. There seems to have been no question as to the man's sincerity or his effectiveness. Great humanitarian work was being accomplished as men and women and children were delivered from an affliction which was as terrible as it was prevalent in that land. The name of Christ was being honored by one who confessed himself only an agent and gave all the glory to the

Wonder-worker from Galilee. But he did not belong; he did not even keep company with the twelve. He arranged his own schedule, planned his own itinerary. He did not contribute to the common purse, and was not dependent upon it. He could not be controlled and he would not share in the joint responsibility of the Galilæan campaign. He was a free lance, a thoroughgoing individualist. He had found something that would work and he was going to work it. Why be hindered with organization red tape and group entanglements when he was getting so much done and having so much fun in doing it?

John and his fellows, however, could not bless such nonconformity but immediately tried to put an end to it. "He does not follow us and we stopped him." There was a certain piety in their prohibition. They were, no doubt, jealous for their Master as well as for their own prerogatives. But there was also a certain element of inhumanity in their action. What would happen to all those wretched people whose wretchedness would continue to afflict them and their families if this healer were not permitted to bring relief to their terrible psychic disorders? Must human suffering continue for the sake of maintaining a religious monopoly? Were not the annihilation

of pain and misery and the recovery of sanity and the restoration of human love and understanding and the reunion of homes shattered by mental disorder justification enough in the sight of God for this man's labors without requiring adherence to a movement? And was not his use of the name of Jesus a tribute sufficiently genuine to assure that he was carrying on in the same spirit which Jesus was seeking to enthrone in the heart of the organization itself? At least Jesus himself thought so. "Do not stop him," he said. "No one who performs any miracle in my name will be ready to speak evil of me. He who is not against us is for us." And there in the presence of that attempt to stigmatize a nonconformist, Jesus picked up a little child who was standing by and putting his arms around it said, "Whosoever receives one of these little ones in my name receives me." "Whoever gives you a cup of water because you belong to Christ, I tell you truly, he shall not miss his reward." Jesus was ready to recognize the real spiritual affinity between himself and any man anywhere who served humanity in his name. He was interested, not in formal allegiance, but in the spirit in which work was done and in the human result achieved. He believed in fellowship. He understood well enough that

Peter and James and John needed him and needed each other, and it was to the fellowship that he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, . . . and, lo, I am with you alway." But at the same time he would not condemn, and he would not attempt to halt, the labors of one who, detached from the group, pursuing his own line of action, was actually doing something for humanity in the name of humanity's Redeemer.

I

In every period when men are truly alive, individualism is sure to make its appearance. Absolute conformity can occur only in times of intellectual and spiritual torpor. When men begin to think, differences arise. When they set out to find God, their pilgrimage sometimes leads them far from the beaten path. When they are seized with a desire to do something for the imprisoned spirits of the race, their passion will drive them ever and anon into activities that are isolated from if not in defiant antagonism to the accepted routine which commands the labors of others who may have just as great hunger for racial emancipation. Immediately, then, the issue arises between those who believe in co-operative

discovery and co-operative effort and those who feel that pioneers must be lonely individuals, untrammeled by organization, unhampered by the slower pace of the multitude, unbiased by the requirements of expensive institutions, unfettered by the necessity of those compromises to which the group must always resort. Sometimes the debate is very bitter. Institutions charge the individualist with selfishness and fanaticism and futility; and the individualist retorts that the institution is insufferably dull and intolerably cautious, incapable of insight or decision.

1. Let it be said at the very beginning that individualism is the wise policy for some people. Only as spiritual vagabonds will they ever get away from the shadow of ancestral thresholds. They are so easily captured by the familiar and so quickly dominated by the crowd that their only safety lies in a complete break with both. If they do not strike out on the path of individual discovery and resolutely put a great distance between them and alluring associations, they will succumb to routine and surrender to the stupor of compliance with those about them. When I spoke at the Eaglesmere Student Conference last summer, they asked me if I had ever seen Bill Simpson? When they uttered his name, there was a

strange depth to their voices that revealed that Bill Simpson, whoever he was, had made a profound impression upon them. Then they told me his story. He had graduated a decade ago from the Union Theological Seminary and accepted a pastorate in an industrial community in New Jersey. He soon lost that pulpit because he believed and preached the Christian way in international relations. Before long he became convinced that the church and the Christian way of life were incompatible. He could not find peace for himself or freedom for the spiritual life in an institution conducted after the pattern of many secular organizations. He, therefore, resigned from the ministry, got rid of his personal possessions, retained only clothing sufficient to cover his nakedness, resolved to have nothing to do with salary. Clad in a shirt and corduroy trousers and barefoot, he tramped the breadth of the continent helping those who needed help in coal mines and factories, in cities and on farms, receiving in return food and clothing and shelter and love, becoming what Frank Eastman calls "a two-legged experiment walking away from institutionalism toward a Franciscan simplicity of life." When he stood on the platform at Eaglesmere, still simply clad and barefoot, his face glowed with unearthly light and his

stories gripped the hearts of some of the finest young men and women in America. No doubt, Bill Simpson's course was a necessity for Bill Simpson, if he were to be loyal to his own deepest needs and consequently to his own largest opportunity. To have remained a part of an institution would have been to stifle some of that large trust in good will, that devotion to simplicity, that dedication to spiritual values which constitute his challenge to our generation. Committees and consecration such as his; a stated salary and such utter surrender to humanity as he felt he must make; the daily official rounds of a fixed pastorate and his passion to address himself immediately and unreservedly to anybody who needed him, were incompatible. Individualism was the only way of life for him, and no doubt it is for occasional souls in every generation.

2. This too must be said—the individualist is at least living creatively. He is not leaning upon a routine prescribed by the group, repeating phrases provided by official councils, living by imitation and by advice. Thomas Masson dates the beginning of his spiritual vagabondage to the day when the vestryman of the church which he attended confessed to him privately that he "didn't know what it was all about." "This was a revelation, for that man's devo-

tion had greatly impressed me. I studied that man for years afterward, reflecting and meditating about him. I watched him raise a family. I don't think in all the period of twenty years he ever missed going to church every Sunday. He always wore a frock coat and silk hat and always took up the collection. It is still wonderful to me that in all that period he could keep on doing the same thing without any awakening. . . . But I have no doubt that there are thousands like him."[1] That is the tendency of institutions—to envelop men in habits and customs which smother all initiative and make unnecessary the personal discoveries which are the secret of all reality in life. That the individualist escapes. Because no one thinks for him, he must think for himself. No ticket is bought for him and he is not put aboard some Pullman which carries him in comfort to some predetermined destination. He chooses his own destination and he plods his own way thither, all of which means that he is at least alert and in action, that he lives not passively but creatively, and in that creative attitude of mind comes that opportunity for new combinations of old material and for those entirely new discoveries which

[1] *Why I Am a Spiritual Vagabond*, p. 34. The Century Co., publishers. Used by permission.

put the race in debt. "In the last analysis, institutional religion owes its existence to the creative insight of the individual. He builds the house in which his successors live, often long after they have forgotten who built it."[1]

II

I have dared to occupy so much time in an appreciation of individualism because, standing upon a platform provided by an institution and having dedicated whatever feeble effort it is mine to give to the service of this institution, I want to be sure that entire justice is done. But having said all this and having meant it, one must confess that individualism is fraught with danger.

1. It is often guilty of impatience. It looks with ill-concealed pity on those other souls who do not share its insurgency. It inclines to call them hard names, cowards, loafers, superstitious, intellectual and spiritual serfs. It is even intolerant toward other individualists. Having struck out boldly to find spiritual reality and having come upon certain aspects of that reality in a vivid experience that has enthralled its admiration and inspired its reverence, it is apt to conclude hurriedly that it

[1] W. A. Brown, *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy*, p. 133.

has found the only way to the only reality and to insist that everybody else shall follow its footsteps and have its unique experience. The individualist ought to be the most tolerant of men, to give to all others the same charter of personal research which he has demanded that they give him. In practice he is often the most intolerant. He is willing that other men shall be pilgrims provided their pilgrimage lands them somewhere in his spiritual neighborhood. Otherwise, he disowns their adventures and brands them mere tramps, whose roaming has got them nothing and whose testimony is a mere vagabond's tale, unworthy of credence.

Such an attitude is greatly to be deprecated. The individualist should recognize, first of all, that for the great masses of men and women institutional life is a necessity; not because they are inferior but because they are different and because they are very busy. They find in institutionalized beliefs and practices not an opiate but a stimulus. Creeds and sacraments are reminders of a great experience which other men have had and arouse in them hunger after such an experience and a determination to seek it. They do not go to church because they have always gone, nor listen to sermons because they have always listened, but because

they find there evidences of a reality which secular life makes seem remote, faith in which they need to recover and can best recover by keeping company with other believers and hearing once again the deep, old, simple prayers and listening to the affirmations of a man in whose ability and sincerity they have confidence. Last summer, in beautiful New Hampshire, I was talking with a banker, the head of an institution in his native State whose business carries him east and west and lays heavy toll upon his manhood. He was no placid conformist either in morals or religion. He had his own ideas about life and he did not hesitate to advocate and exemplify them. But how he loved his church and his minister! That man had been in their pulpit over thirty years. They had seen him in storm and in calm. They knew of what stuff he was made. He was growing old and some thought that the time had come to seek a younger man. But not so my banker friend. "I cannot tell you what it means to us to come out of the commercial strains and absorptions of the week where the material looms so large and spiritual things seem so unreal and hear that minister affirm his faith in God and immortality. It helps a man recover from the tyranny of the senses and makes one feel that there is some-

thing in it after all." There are multitudes like that man whose nature and need are such that they find in religious institutions a contact with reality and a confidence in reality which they never could find alone. They are not weaklings; they are simply the heavy-laden. The individualist who is only irritated by them and indifferent to the institution which ministers to them is guilty of inexcusable ignorance of the plain facts of life. If he had his way, morality and religion would have a more difficult battle than they have now, even under the handicap of a stolid institutionalism.

Equally inexcusable is the intolerance of the individualist toward others who have claimed the same rights but have not arrived at the same results. Reality is infinite and therefore cannot be exhausted by the researches of one finite mind. The pilgrims who landed on New England's stern and rock-bound coast, the colonists who found the deep soil and more equable climate of Virginia, De Soto, who wandered amid the tropical luxuriance of Florida, each gained a different conception of America; and if each had refused to believe the reports of the explorations of others, he must have concluded that they were all wrong, that they had not found America but had landed on some other spot of the earth's sur-

face. It would be hard on the face of it to believe that one continent could present such contrasts of soil and climate. But we know, even better than those pioneers, that each of them had touched the new world and that the truth about America was to be found, not in choosing the testimony of one and rejecting all the rest, but in combining that testimony and adding to it the reports of La Salle and Balboa and Lewis and a multitude of others whose feet made new paths into unknown regions and whose ax and plow and spade revealed the unguessed wealth that God had set here for the enrichment of humanity. It is a simple parable, but a true one. The reality we call God is not less rich in content than America and the discovery one makes of him may be in as great contrast with that made by another as beautiful Florida is with bleak New England. Each may be convinced that he has found God, but let him not endeavor to limit God to his own finding. Rather let him enrich his personal knowledge with the testimony of these other explorers and thank God for new glimpses into his eternal heart.

"To write the love of God alone
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor would the scroll contain the whole
If stretched from sky to sky."

2. Individualism has been characterized by some notorious failures in its ethics as well as in its religion.

(*a*) In its pursuit of unseen reality, it has inclined to despise the reality presented by the humanity at its door. Saint Theresa wanted to go to prison that she might escape having to converse with people and be with people and that in solitude she might give herself to God. Sometimes, she told her disciples, it was God's will for them to leave their retreat and perform humble service to the folk about them but such labor was always a self-denial to be escaped as soon as possible for the courtship of the Divine Lover.

The search for individual salvation has produced some of the most flagrant examples of man's inhumanity to man that the world has seen. A member of a Methodist Church, guilty of domestic infidelity, sought to meet the situation by quoting to his heart-broken spouse the psalmist's word, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." But when the wife whose sanctuary of love had been violated said, "Well, what about the wrong I have suffered?" his placid reply was, "God gave that passage for *my* comfort; *you* have to find one to fit your own need." In his absorption

in getting right with God, he had no conception of getting right with one whose heart he had devastated, and whose shrine of marriage had been desecrated by his disloyalty.

Individualism is the curse of commercial and industrial and political life in America. Men and women have assumed that religion is something between them and God and so, while very religious, they have been hard and cunning and vengeful and selfish in their relations with each other. As employers, as possessors of great wealth, as wielders of economic and political power they have shown an amazing indifference to the needs of the masses whose very lives are literally in their keeping. Lazarus has lain in sores at their gate, unseen and unfed. Mordecais have been strung up on the gallows erected by unchristian corporation policies in whose formation so-called Christian men have had a part. The chairman of a great coal company recently asserted that the great strike and the human suffering involved must be considered from a purely business basis; that he saw miners merely as so much machinery, and that no human rights were involved in the struggle. The president of another great coal company when confronted with the hideous condition in the bunkhouses where his strike breakers

lived expressed no sense of regret or responsibility for the situation. Such statements brought a gasp of astonishment from the press table and words of indignation from the Senate investigation committee, but they are the natural result of a religious individualism which considers its relation to God in no way affected by its relationship to men.

Religion and individualism are in contradiction. Religion is love. One cannot find God by forgetting his fellow men; he finds God with and through his fellows. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." We move toward God when we move toward our fellow men in the restoration of their rights and in sacrifice for their larger life.

(*b*) Individualism tends to unbalanced views of duty. When I was going through the insane hospital at Lima, Ohio, I entered an inner court where the inmates were being given their daily exercise. A man broke away from the group and came running over to me and with shining face said: "Excuse me, sir, but

I am the President of the United States. I did not want the position, but the people elected me, and now somebody has captured me and imprisoned me here. Please tell the sheriff to get me out so that I can resume my responsibilities at Washington." There was no way of helping that man because he had attained a *thoroughly individual viewpoint.* There is always an element of insanity in the individualist. He may feel keenly about duty but he has not corrected his own conception of duty by the experiences and observations of others and, consequently, he is often the victim of notions as absurd as that of the inmate who felt obliged to escape the asylum and enter the White House and assume the care of a great nation. Ibsen's Brand and Shakespeare's Hamlet and the Old Testament Saul are immortal characterizations of the distortion of life that results from the repudiation of wise counsel and close fellowship and the attempt to plot out for oneself a course through the world. Brand had strength, Hamlet had sweetness and Saul had courage, but it was all rendered futile or destructive because it was too solitary. We must remember the injunction of the New Testament, "Forsaking not the assembling of ourselves together;" and the wisdom of the early church, "They continued

steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers;" and that wise word from Malachi, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." Sanity and sweetness are to be found where there is fellowship.

(*c*) Individualism tends to despise that organization of human ability which is so necessary both to the stabilization of society and to the effective championship of the ideals that make for progress. If individualism became the law of life, there would be no social order, only chaos. The individualist himself could not live if there were no institutionalists to promote justice, to provide education, to organize production, to carry on the many indispensable ministries to the spirit of the race. Sherwood Eddy feels keenly the unchristian character of many of our churches but he has remained a churchman because, "if we left these organizations or denominations and came out from them, we should only have to organize afresh."

CHAPTER V

INTELLECTUALISM

Wisdom 'tis and courtesy
Crazed for Jesus Christ to be.

No such learning can be found
In Paris, nor the world around;
In this folly to abound
Is the best philosophy.

Why by Christ is all possessed
Seems afflicted and distressed,
Yet is master of the best
In science and theology.

Who for Christ is all distraught
Gives his wits, men say, for naught.
Those whom love hath never taught
Deem he erreth utterly.

He who enters in this school
Learns a new and wondrous rule.
Who hath never been a fool
Wisdom's scholar cannot be.

—*Jocopone Da Todi* (13th century).[1]

[1] Marguerite Wilkinson, *The Radiant Tree.* The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

CHAPTER V

INTELLECTUALISM

TEXT: "Sage, scribe, critic of this world, where are they all?"—*1 Corinthians 1. 20* (Moffatt).

THIS preacher of long ago was confronted by a situation very like that which troubles religion to-day. A false intellectualism, which derived everything of value from pure reason, threatened the spiritual life of the church. Paul, attempting to tell the simple story of Jesus, was badgered by men who wanted to hear shrewd dialectic, who had a certain pride of learning, and who demanded that an air of profundity be thrown about their pulpit. They had a great deal of confidence in reason and wanted explanations for everything. Syllogism and salvation were practically synonymous in their conception of life.

Within ten years of the army intelligence tests and their amazing and disconcerting testimony to the moronic character of the majority of our population, and especially in view of the infantile character of the tabloid newspapers, which seem to make such an appeal to great numbers of our people, and of

the childish quality of the majority of the screen productions which capture American attention and American dollars, it may appear ludicrous to assert that the church or any other institution in our country is menaced by an overemphasis upon the intellect. What we seem to be suffering from is not an excess but a deficiency of intellectual interest. Too much of our life is tuned to a low intellectual key. We think in headlines, feel in pictures, permit our politics and purchases to be dictated by men who invent catchy slogans. We live in ignorance of history and our knowledge even of the present is largely confined to the mulings of overprosperous after-dinner speakers and to the banalities of overfacile column writers. These and many other indictments of a serious character can be brought and successfully urged against the intellectual life of our people. But admitting the truth of them all, it is still asserted that an evident intellectualism hovers about the religious life of our day and threatens it with corrosion if not with utter destruction.

I

You will understand, of course, that there is no attempt to disparage the intellect or to decry its use within the domain of religion.

Borden P. Bowne used to write pungently of those "who fancy that God is pleased with their ignorance" and has preserved for us the story of the "saint" who said to Doctor South, "God don't need your book-larnin'." The eloquent preacher promptly replied, "No, and he doesn't need your ignorance either." A boast of ignorance has sometimes been heard on ecclesiastical platforms and in meetings for the promotion of piety. Peripatetic evangelists have been known to abjure the discipline of the school and to thank God that they were never spoiled by a college education. Young preachers have been approached by gushing pewholders who have advised them to read their Bibles and let science and history alone. It ought not to be necessary for this pulpit to disavow any sympathy with these apostles of obscurantism and ignorance. The men who read nothing but their Bibles do not even read their Bibles intelligently. There has not been a man in all the centuries who has made a solid contribution to our knowledge and interpretation of the Bible who did not sharpen his intellect on the grindstone of secular studies and who did not recognize the Bible as a part of human history, to be studied in the light of human history. It was my privilege this summer for the first time to stand

by the grave of Dwight L. Moody, that grocer's clerk who, set on fire with the love of God and of man, in turn kindled the sacred flames in many sanctuaries that had grown cold with worldly indifference. He has been quoted sometimes, by those who do not know, as a proof of the value of not knowing. But Mr. Moody himself was a student. "He reached out, he grasped, he seized from everywhere. He had oceans of commentaries and toiled over them."[1] A great part of his life interest was wrapped up in those two magnificent seminaries at Northfield which he founded to provide for poor boys and girls the intellectual schooling which he had been denied. It was Mr. Moody who invited to America to lecture to the students at Northfield that great expositor of evolution as a revelation of God, Mr. Henry Drummond, and who, when he went to England, linked himself with that scholar in a series of evangelistic meetings that stirred the country.

Intellectual life is a necessity even in religion. Man cannot live in a divided world. He cannot develop brains for business and for the professions and be expected to put them to

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[1] Gamaliel Bradford, *D. L. Moody: A Worker In Souls*, pp. 28, 60. Published by Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc. Used by permission.

sleep when he enters the church. He cannot discover the reign of law, in the world opened up to him in science, and accept religious theories that are based upon the notion that this is a universe of caprice. He cannot believe secular history six days in the week, and on Sunday accept a history that directly contradicts it. He must be able to effect a *modus vivendi* between his life as an intelligent citizen and his hopes as a citizen of that better country. To tell him that, while intelligence is indispensable in secular matters, it is a peril to things of the soul, is to arouse his suspicions instead of commanding his faith.

Furthermore, the intellect is our one safeguard against fanaticism. When men begin to discount it and give the reins to their feelings, they are led into the most dangerous excesses, into Dowieism and McPhersonism, into cults of trances and tongues. "When the spirit of romanticism had finally captured a large part of the intellectual class, the orthodox realized with amazement that faith was an even more wild and wayward thing upon which to found and establish systems than dangerous reason itself. The inner experience of man by no means agreed in leading to the conclusions of Paul and Wesley, and gave birth, rather, to a host of strange new religions and

philosophies the like of which had never been on land or sea."[1] It is always a sorry day when in the interest of religion men suspend their critical faculties. Reason is not, as we shall soon see, all of life. There are some values which are beyond its ken. But it does help to raise some standards of truth and of value which we can disregard only at our peril. It assists in making those distinctions without which we are like drunken men, accepting all things as of equal rank. Piety without intellect becomes anarchic and sometimes bestial.

By all means let us sharpen our wits and use them. Let reason be heard in every tribunal in the land and, no less, in our pulpits and in our Bible classes, and through the columns of our religious journals. We want neither doctrines nor policies nor programs nor ethical assumptions that cannot bear the analysis of this spokesman of order and caution.

II

On the other hand, reason must not become an absolute monarch. It can safely rule only when hedged about with constitutional restrictions which define the bounds of its authority. The historian whom I quoted a moment ago

[1] Randall, *Making of the Modern Mind*, p. 405.

in a criticism of unintelligent belief is quite as incisive in his criticism of unbelieving intellectualism. "An exclusive emphasis on reason and intelligence certainly fails to take account of what is both eternal and valuable in human experience. In spite of its many and just claims, the issue it raises to-day is in disrepute, not because its claims were not true, not because they were not sound, but because the ideal of life it offered was *thin*, *flat*, and *meager*."[1] Men cannot live by reason alone. There is no surer lesson on the pages of history than that. Human life and logic are not coextensive. Nor can human hungers feed on propositions in philosophy. Nor are many demonstrated values of life measurable by the instruments of the intellect alone.

Yet there is a disturbing tendency in certain circles to rest upon the intellect, to refuse to go where it cannot lead the way, to accept no value which it cannot prove, to assume that one truly lives when his intellect is sound and that his chief duty is to glorify the reason and exploit it to the end of his days. It is for others to point out the perils of such an attitude in other phases of the many-sided life of man. This preacher can only declare its threat against the wholesomely religious life.

[1] Randall, *Making of the Modern Mind*, p. 393.

Wherever men make reason central and basic in religion, certain unhappy things creep into the temple.

1. There is always a tendency to attempt to explain the unexplainable, to prove the unprovable. Since reason is assumed to be the one instrument of knowledge and the sole element of reality, not only must nothing be accepted whose truth reason cannot demonstrate but nothing can be worth consideration which cannot be so proved. Religion in such a view, therefore, becomes a series of propositions to be demonstrated. The existence of God, the inspiration of sacred writers, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, creation, providence, redemption must be proved as you would prove the binomial theorem or the orbit of the earth or the composition of water. The moment one accepts such premises he starts in the direction of doubt, and he may end in utter skepticism. Many of us know by this time that God and the soul and other great affirmations of religion are not susceptible to the kind of proof with which reason deals. They may be shown to be not unreasonable, but that is not sufficient to meet the demand of a thoroughgoing intellectualist. He wants a series of propositions at the conclusion of which he may write his

Q. E. D. and defy the world to challenge any step in his demonstration. In matters of religion that can never be. There is always room for challenge. No man depending on reason alone would deny the statement that the sum of all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; but many people depending upon reason alone can deny and have denied that the sum of all the universe is God. When a man once understands the limitations of reason, that fact does not disturb him. He understands why, throughout the New Testament, the emphasis is on faith. He has reason for his faith, but his faith is not reason. But the man who does not understand that, who, in a false emphasis upon intellect, seeks for unanswerable logic in religion is headed for disappointment and unbelief. "Many sincere lives have run aground on the rock of intellectualism and, unable to arrive at an intellectual synthesis of their personal experiences and the dogmas of Christianity, have made it a matter of conscience to relinquish a faith which they have not always been able to understand."[1] Dr. Albert Schweitzer, historian, musician, and missionary, in his Selly

[1] Georges Berguer, *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, p. 6. Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., publishers. Used by permission.

Oak lectures confirms our thesis by his own experience: "For ten years . . . I prepared boys in the parish of St. Nicolai, in Strasbourg, for confirmation. After the war some of them came to see me and thanked me for having taught them so definitely that religion was not a formula for explaining everything. They said it had been that teaching which had kept them from discarding Christianity, whereas so many others in the trenches discarded it, not being prepared to meet the inexplicable."[1] The intellectualist comes to religion for that which religion does not offer him—the secrets of the Infinite, the explanation of the universe, an all-inclusive system of thought, faultless logic—and, of course, he goes away disappointed. Or he may remain in the church a preacher, an editor, a teacher, a writer of books, attempting to make of religion a flawless system of propositions and, unaware of the flaws in his logic or the unimpressiveness of his so-called truths, he becomes a stumbling-block to those earnest souls who come to him seeking religion and are alienated from religion by the disappointing intellectual propositions he offers them in the name of religion.

2. Intellectualism not only tries to cover too

[1] *Christianity and the Religions of the World,* p. 89. Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc. Used by permission.

much ground, but it actually covers too little. It misses the truths and values which lie beyond the intellect's range. There are many such values, and life always takes revenge on those who in the name of the intellect ignore them. The age of reason was followed by the romanticism of Rousseau,[1] which was nothing more or less than a revolt against the bold and mechanical interpretation of reality which reason offered. Men became nauseated with correctness. They refused to be made into "walking theorems." They turned the emotions loose and turned themselves over into their keeping. It was good manners to sob in public. Theaters were judged by the number of handkerchiefs called into use during the performance. Plays became domestic tableaux in which the characters wept in unison. It all seems so ridiculous now, and we sympathize with Coleridge in his judgment that "to estimate a play by its power to draw tears is to measure it by a virtue which it possesses in common with the onion." But there was a reason for all that lachrymose excess. Men were in rebellion against the close, stuffy world of dry intellect and took that way of saying that there are some values which are not to be found in the discipleship of cold reason,

[1] See Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism.*

values in the realm of emotion and emotional appreciation. Domestic life and art, mother-love and sunsets cannot be wholly appraised by reason alone. Reason can measure the nervous responses which a mother's mechanism makes to the stimulus of her child; can analyze the colors of the western sky at eventide and explain the laws of refraction. But that is not the whole situation. Beyond the conditioned reflexes in the mother's body and refracted rays in the sky there is something which is more than they, something which eludes the crude scales of intellect and can be understood only by the direct apprehension of something deep and inexplicable within us. Professor J. Arthur Thompson, eminent British biologist, declares: "It is contrary to philosophy and to ordinary experience to believe that man can come near exhausting the reality of facts by scientific methods only." There is truth and there are values which the intellect alone will miss.

That is especially true in the realm of religion. The intellect can wrestle with the problems of theodicy but the need of answering questions is not the whole need which religion exists to meet. John Stuart Mill once asked himself if all his problems were solved and all his questions answered, would he be

satisfied, and to his consternation he discovered that he would not. The intellect can construct a theology but the intellect cannot find God. Paul here sums up all that needs to be said in those words of his, "The world with all its wisdom *failed* to know God." Men find God not at the conclusion of a syllogism nor under a microscope nor at the far end of a telescope, but, as they find beauty in the sunset or glory in a sonata, by turning the total self over to be impressed and possessed. Certain truths about God the intellect will discover, for all truth is of God. The astronomer was right when, thrilled with the disclosure of law in the sweep of the night sky, he cried, "O God, I am thinking thy thoughts after thee." Every discovery of science is a discovery of some phase of God's life, some portion of his will. But it is possible, as you all know, to go on thinking the thoughts of men after them and finding out their purposes without ever knowing the men themselves. We know them when our souls meet. That meeting is more than a mere physical approach, more than the touch of the hand or the glance of the eye or the tone of the voice. There is an achievement which cannot be analyzed, but which we can only call recognition, when something in each of us rises up to salute the

other. I know John Watson would dismiss that as mysticism. I recognize the poverty of language to describe such an event. But I am as sure that it is not "mere" mysticism as I am sure that it is not a pure intellection. It is the response of all that I am to all that the other man is. It is only in some such fashion that anyone can know God, which knowing is the very heart of religion. There must come one of those great moments when he says with Jacob of old, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," and when he hears a voice as Jesus heard it, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" a moment when all that is within is overwhelmed with awe and held by an irresistible fascination and the self, escaping the tyranny of one phase of the self, the intellect, apprehends that other self whom we call God.

2. There are other perils of intellectualism of which there is time to say but a word.

There is the danger of overlaying fact with argument until truth is lost from sight. Marcus Dods says in his *Exposition of Corinthians:* "Admirable and pathetic are the searchings of a noble intellect as it stands in the front rank of Greek philosophies and some of their discoveries concerning God and his ways are full of instruction, but so far as any popular

satisfying knowledge of God is concerned, philosophy might as well have never been." And I cannot refrain from adding those picturesque words of Arthur Gossip: "Here is a mass of folk for whom Christ died, who are not helped but confused by our theologies, which turn out to be much like a stained-glass window—a wonderful thing to many within, but to outsiders a mere smudge and blur of which from their angle they can make nothing, and which actually keeps them, peer how they may, from seeing in almost at all."[1] The attempt to appear wise, to make no statement that is not proven, often leads to a multiplication of reasons which are only confusing. We forget that suggestion is often better than argument, that confident affirmation of a quiet faith may be more convincing than debate and that within the breasts of men there is an attorney who will plead the case for religion much better than we can. "When I came to you I did not come . . . with any elaborate words of wisdom." That statement can be overworked and be made the excuse for turning away from the sincere questionings of earnest souls. But it is nevertheless profoundly true that much of the time it is better to tell the story of Jesus than to deliver elaborate

[1] *From the Edge of the Crowd*, p. 210.

apologies in his behalf. He has demonstrated a rather large ability to take care of himself when he is turned loose in the crowd. He is crippled only when we entangle him in our technicalities. Our business is to get out of his way, to let men see him as he was and is. Speaking from the standpoint of some familiarity with the conclusions of psychology, the greatest thing we can do for our people in the way of character formation and transformation is to present to them the Master, himself, unhampered by our poor philosophies of his nature or by our foolish attempts to be wise about his ever challenging mystery. It is not our labored deductions about him but his own native grandeur that captivates and capitalizes the inner resources of sentiment and will for the great ends of human life. Walter Damrosch's remarkable service in the broadening and deepening of the musical appreciation of the American public through the medium of the radio is achieved by talking about a great symphony very simply and just enough to place the key of understanding in our hands and then—*he gives us the symphony!* We must talk about Jesus. We can help interpret him. But let us be sure that we let folks have *him.*

Intellectualism has often made religion the

victim of passing fads of thought. The desire to be right, intellectually, keeps one on tiptoe for the latest conclusions of intellectual leaders, and makes one especially susceptible to their leadership. The intellectual is apt to be a Freudian when Freudianism occupies the center of the stage and a behaviorist when behaviorism is in the limelight. Nothing is surer, however, than that each new theory will be subject to serious modification, if not overthrow, and that the man who is revising his religion to suit the demands of these temporary isms of the intellectual life will be like the woman whose husband moved so often that she, in attempting to cut her carpets to suit the rooms in each new home one after the other, by and by found that she had not enough carpet to fit any room. Religion must recognize scientific advance, but religious reality is not dependent on the latest theory of evolution or psychology. Religion stands on its own foundation. It is something more than a theory of how things came to be what they are, or how, being what they are, they function from day to day. I would not risk very much on the correctness of any opinion as to the size of the universe or as to the formation of the conditional reflexes of the nervous system, but I would risk everything on the power

of Christ to make over any man who will live with him.

Intellectualism tends to make Christianity an intellectual dogma to be believed rather than a life to be lived. That is always a calamity. It was not correct opinions that Jesus was after, but a courageous and kindly life, a life of love. The bane of the Christian church to-day is that so many think to be a Christian means the holding of certain views about God and Christ and life rather than obedience to God and conformity to the spirit of Christ and escape from the tyranny of the immediate into the fullness and freedom and majesty of eternity.

CHAPTER VI
EMOTIONALISM

There are whole companies of souls waiting—as birds wait in the twilight of the morning for the dawn—whole companies of souls waiting for someone to raise the tune, waiting for any encouragement to come over heartily on the side of God, and to break forth into singing.—*John A. Hutton.*

Religious emotion is rational only when it springs from the contemplation of religious truth, and from building ourselves up on our most holy faith of the gospel. Whenever it is sought for itself, it becomes neurological and pathological. . . . We must bring all revelations, manifestations, emotions, outpourings to the one sure test of righteousness.—*Borden B. Bowne.*[1]

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[1] *Studies in Christianity.* Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers. Used by permission.

CHAPTER VI

EMOTIONALISM

TEXT: "I will pray in the Spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing praise in the Spirit, but I will also sing praise with my mind."—*1 Corinthians 14. 15* (Moffatt).

A VERY much admired and much read British teacher and essayist has written a small volume whose interesting title is *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion.* The immediate suggestion is, of course, that the Christian religion once had a radiance all its own. It had. It began with the most radiant soul that ever walked the earth, Jesus of Nazareth. There is yet to be achieved by any other person that spiritual victory which enabled him, who early caught sight of his Calvary and who entered deeply into the sorrow of God for the woes of the world, nevertheless, to move on his way like one who was on the road to a coronation in a paradise where there was neither sorrow nor death. But such a victory he had. Just as in the resurrection story there were angels to roll away the stone from his tomb, so all along the path of his life he seemed to have

command of those spiritual forces which rolled off his heart any gloom with which fate sought to imprison and smother him. He was always emerging from the sepulcher of sorrow and walking amid the purple hush of new mornings of hope and gladness.

The New Testament is a book of joy. The men who wrote it and the men and women and children to whom it was written lived in troublous times. The shadow of the persecutor lay across the threshold of their homes. Dungeon and gibbet threatened them. They were poor and oppressed and, ever and anon, the pages of the Book are lighted with the fires of their affliction. But they had something which enabled them to rise above it all, to create areas of peace in the midst of the most terrible scenes, to raise doxologies in dungeons and to make the smoke of their burning flesh an incense of praise to God.

Christianity began, therefore, with emotion. It was not a dull attempt at reform or a dry philosophic criticism of popular opinions. It was the breaking forth of a great gladness in the midst of a people who were jaded and weary. There was a reason for its gladness. The sense of sins forgiven and of restored fellowship with God, the thrill of the indwelling Spirit, the promise of eternal life and the

expectation of the speedy realization of the triumphant reign of God upon earth, combined to introduce the lowliest heart to a bliss to which before it had been an utter stranger. Sometimes this joy passed into ecstasy and rapture. Paul tells of an experience when he, himself, was so rapt away in the chariot of emotions that he lost consciousness. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell) . . . such an one caught up to the third heaven . . . and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." A number of times in the New Testament there is a reference to the gift of tongues, an experience in which men and women suddenly began to talk in a language not their own. Sometimes it was the language of some other Mediterranean peoples; sometimes a gibberish which no one could translate. Psychology has offered what to many seems a scientific account of this experience but no explanation has been given which abrogates the fact that it was occasioned by an overwhelming ecstasy which had taken possession of the Christian soul. Modern scientific appraisal of this ancient Christian phenomenon but confirms our impression that the preaching of Christianity was accompanied by the most powerful emotion.

One cannot read his New Testament with simplicity and not be impressed with the great value which is there attached to joy. Paul makes it one of the three evidences of the reign of God: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." He gives it a place next to the crowning Christian virtue, love, in his catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit. He urges his people to cultivate it; "Rejoice always" is his exhortation, repeated again and again. He makes it the object of prayer and of apostolic activity. He says that to be in the spirit and to be filled with joy are synonymous.

But if one reads his New Testament carefully, he is also impressed with the sense of peril with which the presence of much emotion is viewed. It introduced confusion into their services. It became often an end in itself and pursuing it men forgot the larger virtue of love. It was made the justification of most absurd utterances; men declared that they were praying in the spirit, praising in the spirit, and prophesying in the spirit and refused to permit their utterances to be measured by intelligence. It seemed many times to be hostile to ethical living. The church which was most characterized by these ecstatic gifts was one where the most abhorrent moral

failures were tolerated. "I am told," so might we paraphrase Paul's letter, "that there is immorality among you such as is unknown even among the pagans;" and, again, "I am almost afraid to come to you, afraid of finding quarrels, and jealousies, and rivalries, and arrogance, and slander." So serious did the situation become that he was compelled to send the strongest appeal: "Brothers, do not be children in the sphere of intelligence. Pray in the spirit, but pray with your mind; sing praise in the spirit, but sing praise with your mind. I would rather say five words with my own mind for the instruction of the people than ten thousand words under the influence of an emotion." And in order to drive his appeal home, he says something which is seldom found in his letters, "If anyone consider himself gifted with the Spirit, let him understand that what I write you *is a command of the Lord.*" With such vigor did this man who himself knew the value of emotion deal with the problem which emotionalism had created in the church of his love. Against it did he set, not only his own intelligence, but the great name of Christ.

II

The subsequent history of Christianity has witnessed the outcroppings of the same tenden-

cies that are encountered in the New Testament. There probably has never been a time when the church was barren of joyous emotion. There have been seasons when its life seemed athrob with joy. The Crusades, which spent so much of the energy and spilt so much of the blood of Christendom of the middle ages, were the creation of great mass emotions. The soaring cathedrals whose lifting lines in graceful pillars and lofty arches and climbing spires carry one out of time into eternity, out of the dust of things into the clear, sweet abodes of the Spirit, were possible only because men's hearts were stirred with great religious feeling. "The enormous output of the thirteenth century rested on a great popular enthusiasm. Gothic was not the work of the monks; . . . it was the work of the people. The sculpture, the wrought metal, the glorious carved screens which astonish us to-day in remote country places were the work of the village mason, the village carpenter, the village painter, the village blacksmith. They were not built of necessity; they were built because men had a passion for building."[1] Behind that passion was a religious emotion. The people were enthused because they were building for

[1] F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *Mediæval Contributions to Modern Civilization*, p. 167.

God. The foundations of monasticism were laid in the hearts of men like Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi, who were on fire with the love of God; and the work of the various monastic orders was carried forward by monks who, in selfless love to God and to man, sought to provide for the city of God an inexhaustible source of spiritual energy and power. Along the path of the Christian centuries have appeared the great Christian mystics who sought immediate union with God and finding it were "inundated with life and joy." Of Catherine of Genoa it was said by her biographer: "She would hide herself in some secret place and there stay, and, being sought, she was found upon the ground, her face hidden in her hands, altogether beyond herself in such a state of joy as is beyond thought and speech. And when she came forth from her hiding place, her face was rosy as it might be of a cherub and it seemed as if she might have said, 'Who shall separate me from the love of God?' "[1] Some of us have vivid memories of similar evidences of religious emotion. We used to be taken to camp meetings, where men and women sought the joy of the Lord. We can see them yet; old Uncle John, pacing up and down in the straw behind the altar,

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 432.

his face shining like an angel's as he recited the experience which came to him while walking across the plowed fields with his Lord; and Brother Marvin, who had not Uncle John's facility of words, but who, when the blessing came, shot his index finger quiveringly toward the skies as if he would point to One whom we could not see but of whom he was so sure; and Sister Skillings, whose short ecstatic cry was the announcement to the crowd that she had received her "telegram from glory."

Christian emotion is not, therefore, confined to the pages of the New Testament. Wherever the gospel of Jesus has been preached men's hearts have been stirred. It has seemed almost too good to be true that God loved them, that their sins could be forgiven, that they should become God's children and sharers of his eternal glory. The glad response of the heart to such a revelation of God was a healthy one and has inspired some of the noblest creations in art and architecture and music and literature, and some of the costliest sacrifices for God's glory and man's good. But sometimes that stirring of heart has been made an end in itself. Emotion has been cultivated for its own sake. Men have sought it as they sought the thrills of the theater or as they followed the lure of adventure, as the

means of escape from the drab setting of their defeated and purposeless lives. Others have sought it as an evidence of the presence and favor of a God whom they are unwilling to believe without such evidence. Emotion has been made a substitute for that faith which is the corner stone of all true religion. When this happens, when emotion is cultivated for its own sake or when it is made a crutch upon which the believer tries to hobble into the Kingdom, there is always disaster. In the one case religion becomes an occasional pietistic orgy without value to the difficult enterprises of the kingdom of God; in the other a genuine religious experience is never born, "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is." Men enter fellowship with God by what our fathers called "naked faith"; that is to say, by a faith which does not wait for nor depend upon any kind of pleasant emotion; a faith which Donald Hankey called "betting one's very life" that there is a God.

Healthy religious emotion is the certain result of a true apprehension of the love of God in Jesus Christ and becomes the motive power of beautiful character and effective service. Emotionalism is the worship of and dependence upon emotion and is a hideous cancer gnawing at the vitals of character and

begetting a pernicious religious anæmia which renders the victim useless for purposes of the kingdom.

III

It seems almost ludicrous to envisage emotionalism as a peril threatening the life of the church. There are many observers who would say: "What deters us is a *lack* of emotion in our religion. No shouts are heard at our altars, no Amens peal forth from our pews; our services are 'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.' Our hymns 'get' us if they have a musical quality that appeals to us; they do not seem to be seized upon because of an inner demand to express the gladness of our souls at the thought of God. There is an absence of jubilation in the atmosphere of the churches, and whatever joys are in evidence among multitudes of Christians appear to have no higher sources than those which are in the world and of the world. Christianity seems to have lost its radiance."

With that observation the preacher is not inclined to quarrel. There is an evident dryness in certain phases of Protestantism. Our hearts are not like watered gardens. We do not evidence the thrill which comes to the Catholic at the elevation of the sacred Host

or which used to make John Wesley say he had no difficulty in distinguishing a Methodist, for he always began his testimony with the words, "I feel." And, while there is in this preacher's heart no desire to develop anything like a Protestant mass or to recover early Methodist camp-meeting emotions with their concomitant expressions, he does wish with all his heart that there could be in our minds such clear convictions about the love of God and its relation to human destiny in general and to our own lives in particular, that our mouths would be filled with laughter and our tongues with singing and we should begin spontaneously to chant the Lord's song in a strange land. There is not enough of this kind of emotion in our religion.

But we are to-day, as yesterday, afflicted with emotionalism. We are not cultivating the same kind of emotions, nor seeking them in the same way, nor acquiring them as effectively as our ancestors did, but we are in danger of giving them a place of interest and control which does not belong to them and which is the very essence of emotionalism.

1. There is a tendency in certain quarters to deduce our ethics from our emotions. I mean, simply and plainly, that, by a strange perversion, what men and women *want* to do has

been accepted as a criterion of what they *ought* to do. Freudian psychology, with its emphasis upon the danger of repression, is partly responsible. Science seemed thereby to sanction the authority of desire and human nature was only too glad to find justification for obeying its impulses. Behaviorism has made its own contribution to the result. Describing conscience as a mere visceral reaction, making man a mere mechanism of behavior patterns, it has reduced ethics to chaos. "We are all doing what we have to do and that is what our conditioned reflexes do under stimuli over which we have no control." If that is what we are and that is the story of our lives, the very use of the word "ought" is an absurdity except as we admit that if a man uses the word he has to do it and if he doesn't, he isn't able to. At any rate, it means nothing as far as obligation is concerned. Side by side with these two influences is a third, a breaking down of old standards. The notion is abroad that our accepted ethics are simply a combination of tradition and convention. I was talking to one of the most brilliant students in one of our universities the other day. He was questioning all our standards. Why should we do this? Why not that? When a student gets

into that mood, it is no use to quote authorities to him, for they mean nothing. So I proposed the test of experience. I said, "Well, after rather long experience the race has discovered that some practices make for the abundant life and others destroy it."

But the answer didn't even make him bat a mental eye. Without a change of expression he replied, "Well, what of that? How do we know that we ought to live at all?"

A little later I sat in with a number of intellectuals who were discussing certain social problems. They were all agreed that the important thing in art and education was self-expression but when it came to the determination of what kind of self-expression, they were at sea. I asked them what made one self-expression good and another bad. There was no answer. Surely, it is not to be wondered that even among religious people, who must live in this chaotic moral atmosphere, there should be an inclination to base ethics upon emotion, to do what they want to do and feel justified, to reduce morals to the discovery of the means of their own comfort and gratification. When that happens, however, morality dies and religion becomes the sanction of all kinds of ethical anarchy.

2. Undue confidence in the emotions easily

misleads one as to the real condition of his moral and religious life. Tears and thrills alike are often evoked by subconscious associations that have nothing to do with religious values. I know a very scholarly man who never can hear a strain of that old hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul," even though interwoven incidentally in an organ voluntary which quickly moves on to other themes, without being overwhelmed with a perfect flood of emotions. Did he not understand the human mind and did he not have a better test of the presence of God, he might easily conclude that his whirl of rapture was the result of a divine visitation. But because he knows himself, he is aware that that strain, by reason of the almost forgotten associations of childhood, merely evokes an emotional response of yesterday and has nothing to do with his present condition of body or soul. It is not God's grace but a returning and unrecognized stimulus that is playing upon him. C. K. Ogden of Cambridge has done us a real service by pointing out that certain words and phrases have unique emotive value purely by reason of our individual history and that their effect upon us, whether heard in church or in the drawing room or read in a book, is out of all proportion to their real significance and is

no revelation of our present moral state. What is true of words is also true of colors, of architectural forms, of gestures, of everything that occurs more than once in the course of our human life. The sight of an old hymn book may bring with it an elation that is almost heavenly, because long ago that book shared an hour of rapture whose pulsations return in company with the visual impressions with which they once were affiliated. Feelings as well as thoughts are "remembered" and oftentimes it is as difficult to determine why a mood swoops in upon us as to discover why a thought strides imperiously into the throne room of the mind. To rest content with our situations or ourselves to-day because certain pleasant emotions visit us is to throw judgment to the wind and to accept as evidence that which may be and often is only an irrational survival from a vivid experience of yesterday.

3. Emotionalism has another queer result in present-day life. It has helped men and women to make the pursuit of emotion the thing, even in religion. A woman was telling me about a sermon to which she had recently listened. She thought it was a great sermon. "Why," she said, "it just made the tears come to your eyes." Not a word about new moral

visions, new revelations of duty, new challenges to sacrifice, new inspirations to self-scrutiny, new motives for unpleasant tasks. Her sole appreciation of the sermon was that it gave her the pleasure of a few religious tears. Well, there is a value in tears. We do not need to listen to the romanticist to discover that. But if that is all that we go to church for, if we think that religion is a mere means to an enjoyable holiday of emotion, we have certainly missed the mark. Jesus made central in religion the discovery of the will of God, and there never was a wholesome religious movement anywhere that has not begotten a new sensitiveness to moral values and a new consecration to their coronation in life. An emotion that is not linked up to a continually enlarging ethical appreciation is a dangerous guest in the house of life.

4. Emotionalism in our day leads men to slavery of feeling rather than to pursuit of truth. They lose all ability to rationalize about any question; they merely emotionalize about it. I listened intently to an attempted discussion about the Bible the other day. One of the party was endeavoring to be intelligent, to look at all the facts and to form his conclusions in the light of facts; but the other was indulging in a series of emotional explosions.

Whenever a fact was presented that did not agree with his water-tight tradition, he shut his eyes and refused to consider it, and then he would proceed to affirmations that were so absurd that if he were to indulge in the same sort of affirmation about any other subject his sanity would be seriously questioned. He thought he was being religious; he was only being ridiculous. An attitude that tests facts by feelings, that makes emotion the criterion of truth and error is not only irrational but unchristian. "I came," said Jesus, "to bear witness to the truth." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And Paul declared, "I will pray in the Spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing praise in the Spirit, but I will also sing praise with my mind."

In these sifting days when the church is facing an increasing intelligence in the world, her membership must be intelligent. A mere emotion about the Bible and Christ and the life eternal will not fit one to be either an interpreter or a soldier of the faith. If ever an old exhortation needed repetition in our ears it is this: "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Our complex problems will not be solved, nor will the foes of the good life be put to rout, nor will the amazing forces

released by science be brought into captivity to Christ by pleasant moods.

"Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear: O, clouds, unfold;
Bring me my chariot of fire.

"I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

Trained minds, that have mastered the technique of personal and social life, alone are competent for the task of building the New Jerusalem anywhere.

CHAPTER VII

IDEALS

Whether the new age will be a gorgeous barbarism or a splendid civilization depends on the perception of values which our children will have. To help them to see the glory of truth, and the splendor of beauty, the eternal and unchanging world of immaterial reality, is the work before us.—*Kirsopp Lake.*

Ideals which have no counterpart in reality and are created either by the rebel will, which, however angrily it may declaim against freezing reason, cannot make things other than they are, or by the poetic fancy, which can only weave a world of dreams into which we may flee from the facts of life—such ideals are frivolous and can bring us no deep or lasting satisfaction.—*Dean Inge, Outspoken Essays* (*Second Series*), p. 5.[1]

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[1] Longmans, Green & Co., publishers. Used by permission.

CHAPTER VII

IDEALS

TEXT: "And I to Christ."—*1 Corinthians 1. 12* (Moffatt).

THE ideal and our way of holding it are sometimes very dangerous elements in life. In Corinth was a man with the very highest ideal. Some had taken the philosophic Paul as their exemplar, others the likable Peter, and others the eloquent Apollos, and the church was ringing with the praises of these brave pioneers. But this man said, "You may take Paul, and you may take Apollos, and you may take Peter, but it is Christ for me." Yet Paul found it necessary to rebuke him. His idealism had made him an uncomfortable fellow to live with. It had developed in him a superiority complex. There was too much pride in his voice when in the presence of those who were saying "I belong to Paul," "I belong to Apollos," "I belong to Peter," he tossed his head and thrust out his chest and declared "But I belong to Christ." That was a great allegiance. There was no one on the religious horizon who could be compared with Jesus. But such a way of affirming one's loyalty

to Christ had become an irritant which did not honor Christ nor inspire others to honor him. It fomented division and threatened the very existence of the Christian Church in that wicked city. Paul was compelled to make a pointed and personal appeal to this man and to the others, "Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you all to drop these party cries." To that level had the ideal descended—it had become a party cry.

I

It ought not to be necessary for this pulpit to declare its recognition of the value of the ideal. Gilbert Chesterton once said, "The center of every man's existence is a dream." We are, none of us, content with what we are and what we have. We carry around with us, tucked away in the secret places of the heart, a dream of what we want ourselves and our own world to be. And ever and anon that dream breaks through the petty absorptions of our busy life, destroys our momentary contentment and creates a homesickness for a better world of thought, feeling and action than any into which we have yet come.

"Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,

Sure tho' seldom, are denied us
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones.
. . . . . .
There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle."[1]

If there is one thing for which we ought to thank God, it is this inveterate dreaming of humanity; this pressing in upon our actual, sordid, limited life of an ideal world of beauty and truth. This is the one event that prevents stagnation and encourages us, in spite of individual and racial blunderings and backslidings, to believe that we shall yet under God move forward to a goal that is at once human and divine. As long as there are dreams to haunt us, however far we may stray or however long we may be gone, we shall not end our wanderings among the swine in that far country of unhappy misadventures in pursuit of freedom and joy. We shall find our way back again as certainly as the prodigal, tantalized by the memories of his father's house, said, "I will arise and go." When dreams die, when ideals disintegrate in the mind of any human being, at that hour is his doom sealed. This

[1] Robert Browning, "Cristina."

is the despair of Edwin Markham over the man with the hoe that he is "dead to rapture and despair"—"a thing that grieves not, that never hopes," the light within his brain blown out! This it is which thrills the soul of Matthew Arnold as he sees a devoted minister moving into the misery and squalor of East London: "he sets up a mark of everlasting light above the howling senses' ebb and flow." Let us cherish the ideal as we would cherish life itself.

But we cherish it wisely only as we recognize its perils. The ideal is sometimes the occasion of very unideal conduct. There are certain ailments to which the idealist seems particularly susceptible and against which he needs to maintain the most vigorous defense.

1. For some reason it has frequently been the tendency of those who live with the ideal to look for its realization in the remote. Sometimes that remoteness is geographical. Schiller, living in Germany, found his ideal in Greece. He could not build his longings into any transformation of German society. He could only find room in the Hellenic state. There was no heroic stuff in the German Valhalla that suited him. He must have Homer and the heroes of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." The North Sea was too cold a climate for his

reveries; he must journey in imagination to the Ægean, and there in a land of fancy conceive the world which would charm our fears and bid our sorrows cease. Paradise could never come in Berlin; it must spring out of the soil of Athens. The poet Lenau lived in Austria and, like most poets, he had his dreams of the ideal state of existence. Where do you suppose he located it? In the neighborhood of Pittsburgh! So sure was he that, not by the hills and valleys of the beautiful blue Danube, but along the winding course of the Allegheny would his dreams come true, that he took a trip hither. Doctor Babbitt adds a simple comment: "Perhaps it's not surprising that he finally died mad."[1] That is not a very gracious word from the eminent professor of French literature at Harvard University. If he would come out and visit us once, he might attribute Lenau's madness to another cause. Pittsburgh is not a paradise but, then, neither is Boston! The tragic thing is not that Lenau was so disappointed with us but that he could not find any place for ideal building in his own native land.

Sometimes the remoteness that gets tangled up with the ideal is temporal. It lures men's

[1] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, p. 91. Reprinted by permission of author.

thoughts into the distant past or the distant future. Schlegel was not in sympathy with his own time but was forever turning toward the Middle Ages, as if there were something there which we have not and without which life must be pauperized. The life in Eden has been the golden age of many dreams. Others look forward to a time so far removed that it has about as little influence upon their conduct to-day as the threat of final extinction of the sun's heat has upon the price of coal in the Pittsburgh market. We are rather sure that some day the sun may cease to be the great central heating plant for the solar system and our idealists, some of them, believe in "one far-off divine event"; but anything so far away might as well not be believed in at all as far as its effect upon our eating and drinking and giving in marriage is concerned.

There is something wrong with ourselves and our ideal if it cannot take root in the here and now and begin to function in our immediate neighborhood. It is valueless for us and our world. It might as well not exist as far as practical results are concerned. What is needed for us who live in Pittsburgh, say, in the year 1927, is some dream that has a vital connection with what we are doing to-day and what we plan to undertake to-morrow, with

our families and our schools and our business and our politics and our churches; a dream that does not beget in us futile pinings for a romantic yesterday or beguile us into pleasant speculations about what lies beyond the purple horizon of far millenniums, but that reveals something for us to do as we leave this sanctuary or when we arise from our slumbers Monday morning; a dream that springs out of American soil and has to do with American manners and builds its castles by the side of American rivers and hears its hosannas along our crowded ways of life and sees redemption taking place here in this melting pot of strange civilizations and antagonistic cultures. Any dream that is not mixed up with the life about us is not a gift of God but a trick of the devil. May the Great Physician inoculate us against that plague of remoteness which is the black death of the soul!

2. The ideal has often a narcotic effect on the motor impulses. It seems to lull them into inactivity. Because of its very loveliness, the possessor may consider the possession of it a sufficient achievement in itself and may hastily conclude that he has done his duty, made his contribution, and is therefore excused from further toil. One of our preachers read a paper before the Ministerial Association

the other day on the subject, "Should Reformers Be Shot?" His thesis was that most reformers are pests because they are not doing anything to achieve the reform about which they talk except to talk about it. He was certainly laying a finger upon a sensitive spot in our social anatomy. After one has acquired a brilliant ideal for economic or political or religious life, it is so easy to develop into a mere lecturer occupying many platforms and buttonholing many hapless individuals as one pours out a flood of descriptive and hortatory language, but never indulging in laborious effort or in other costly sacrifice to give the ideal embodiment in the world of affairs. One of two things will happen to an ideal that stands at the door and knocks; it will either be invited in or it will have the door slammed in its face. If the latter, it will go away leaving behind it that worst of all human conditions, a soul that has seen the better but has chosen the worse. If, however, the ideal is welcomed, there is still uncertainty as to its future. It may be allowed to express itself in mere reverie, in literary and poetic effusions, or it may take command of the life and lead it out into the arena where it will engage in combat with its foes, risking everything for the sake of victory. In a word, it will preach or it will

practice. There is always danger that it will merely preach. There are two questions, therefore, that men ought to be asking: What is the quality of my ideal? and What am I doing in its behalf? Albert Noyes in "The Dawn of Peace" has a very stirring stanza:

"Dreams are they? But ye cannot stay them,
Or thrust the dawn back for one hour!
Truth, Love, and Justice, if ye slay them,
Return with more than earthly power."[1]

There is a vital faith expressed in these lines —faith in the ultimate triumph of right. But there is also a real peril in the mood in which sometimes they are read, the mood which assumes that dreams can take care of themselves and that nothing can stay them; that when we have had a dream and have uttered it, we have started something so vigorous, aye, so omnipotent, that we are excused from any further solicitude in its behalf and from all sacrifice for it. But that is not history. The dawn has been delayed, not one hour, but many because of our idleness. Truth, love, and justice have lain in graves for discouraging years.

3. The ideal, sometimes, has operated to

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Collected Poems*, Vol. II. Copyright, 1913, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

lift men out of touch with the reality. The dreamer has always been accused of being impractical. Sometimes that accusation is born of a laziness that dislikes being disturbed and considers everything an intrusion that suggests a change. Sometimes it is the child of a cowardice that is afraid to undergo the pangs of readjustment which the ideal demands. Every ideal is impractical to the man who profits by things as they are and who is out for profit alone. But this charge is not always the irritated snarl of disturbed comfort. It is often a just appraisal of the actual situation. Not every dream can be fitted into the real world and not every dreamer is sensible about his dreams. A man may live so much in his dream world that he loses all common sense. Mr. H. G. Wells has a disconcerting characterization of a Victorian statesman in his *Outline of History*.[1] He says that he "was a profoundly ignorant man and lived, as it were, in a luminous blinding cloud, with no knowledge of ethnology, no vision of history as a whole, misconceiving the record of theology, ignorant of the elementary ideals of biological science, or modern political, social, and economic science." The world will never

[1] The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

believe but that this statesman was a good man. He was a man of ideals, but if there be any truth in Mr. Wells' indictment, his very ideals blinded him to the necessity of some practical knowledge which he needed to have if he were going to do anything more than muddle through some situations which confronted him. There are captains of industry who dream of a time when industry shall be a happy family characterized by mutual understanding and forbearance, with a maximum of opportunity and minimum of unemployment for all but who are so totally unaware of human psychology that their attitudes and plans are destroying the very things they are trying to create. There are churchmen who believe that religion is the only hope of the race and dream of a situation in which the church shall mediate religion to whole classes of the population that are now unreached, but they have not even begun to be aware of the changes that must take place in pulpit and in pew, in message and in method and in program before such a dream can be realized. If they stood utterly outside and had no dreams, they would realize these things but the very fervency aroused by their own dreams keeps them ignorant of the real world in which they live and with which they must deal. They too live

in a luminous blinding cloud which is nothing more or less than the aura about their own ideals. Very early in his ministry, Jesus had to wrestle with this peril. "If Thou be the Son of God," was the suggestion made to him, "cast thyself down. Is it not written that he shall give his angels charge over Thee?" What a dream that was!—to do something spectacular, catch the attention of the crowd, bring it to its knees, win the nation and the throne. "They will eat out of your hands, and believe anything you say; surely God will take care of you; isn't it written?" But Jesus was shrewd enough to see through the fallacy of the proposition. His ideal did not blind him to the real. There was the law of gravitation to be reckoned with. There was the deeper law in the hearts of men whom he hoped to win, that makes, not magic, but love the key to the soul. Because his ideal did not blind him to the real his ideal was saved to a finer embodiment and to a lasting place in the affairs of men.

4. Sometimes the ideal is permitted to foster bitterness. One turns from things and from men, from government and industry and the church as he is sure they ought to be and sees them as they are, and disappointment and sometimes loathing fill his soul. It is no mere

chance that idealists often become cynics. The sharp contrast between their dream and the reality often sours the soul as the electrical storms used to sour the milk on the farmhouse shelf. Gamaliel Bradford, that modern calcium light penetrating so many souls, has a chapter on Gustave Flaubert that embodies in the concrete this disturbing relationship between idealism and cynicism. "He was a thoroughgoing idealist and his idealism degenerated into pessimism because it never could be satisfied."[1] He asked too much of life; his ideal was so high, his conception of what men might be was so noble that the sordid reality as it creeps upon the dull and muddy earth bred nothing but perpetual disappointment and despair. And that is a true judgment because Flaubert himself said: "I detest my fellow men and do not admit that I am akin to them. I am sure that men are no more brothers than the leaves of the woods are alike. They suffer in common, that is all."[2] Such contempt in the soul of a dreamer is only an illustration of a reaction which easily lays hold upon one who with vivid imagination conceives the possibilities of human life and then with keen

[1] *Bare Souls*, p. 256. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

[2] *Ibid.*

vision turns to look at life as it is. The shock is disillusioning and may be deadly. Jesus is our salvation here as everywhere. No one ever dreamed such dreams for the race as he. He caught a vision of society as a kingdom of love and patience and brotherhood and of men as sons of God. And when he turned and met with the drunkard and the libertine and the worst of human failures, his heart was moved, not to bitterness, but to pity and to redemptive effort. With her, whom others wanted to stone to show their contempt for her and her deed, he dealt compassionately and hopefully. Even the dying thief on the cross did not move him to despair but, rather, to the promise, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." It was because his idealism was compassed about with faith, faith in the power of the love of God to touch the souls of men, faith in the power of men's souls to respond regeneratively to the touch of the Father's love! Without such faith our ideals will make of us misanthropes living in cautious remoteness from the world of men.

5. Finally, the idealist is often tempted to despise the immediately practical. He sees things as completed and glorious wholes. What can be done to-day toward the realization of that final glory is often as far removed from it and seemingly as unrelated to it as the

breaking up of the clods of the field was to the finished airplane. But if the clods were not broken, the seed could not be sown; if the seed were not sown, there could be no flax; and if there were no flax, there could be no raw material; and if there were no raw material, no mill; and if there were no mill, no canvas; and if there were no canvas, no light, strong wings for Wright's pioneering in the field of aviation. Much of the time the thing which you and I can do toward the realization of our dreams is as simple and as unromantic and as irrelevant as the farmer's following the plowshare and, for that reason, it is easy to overlook it, to do nothing because we cannot immediately launch our ship into its mastery of the air. But unless we can couple our dreams with the furrow which we can make to-day, unless we will actually soil our shoes to follow the plow, blister our hands as we keep it in its course and wrestle our way about the stumps and through the long tormenting roots of age-long custom and tradition, our dreams cannot come true and we, ourselves, will be merely hearers of the word. Do we want a world of peace? Let us begin in our own neighborhood and among racial groups in our cities to cultivate good will. "Let us purge our hearts of all suspicion,

prejudice, selfishness; foster the spirit of good will in schools and churches by voice and pen; challenge all sources of discord between national and international groups; establish such personal contacts with men of different faiths and social status as shall become a leaven of brotherhood all over the continent; study sympathetically the activities of men and women in other lands that knowledge may banish suspicion," as I heard our South American brethren so nobly resolve to do, in that notable conference in Montevideo. Let us urge our representatives to consider the outlawry of war. Let us support societies and journals that are patiently exploring and educating our people to walk in the way that leads to peace. Do we want industrial brotherhood? Let us at any cost, here and now, treat like a brother, union or non-union, the man with whom we deal. Do we want a church actually functioning as the redeeming agency in the city? Let us begin to do something for our neighbors who are out of touch with religion and who have no vision of God. For, old as is the rimed word, it has lost none of its significance:

"True worth is in being, not seeming,
In doing each day that goes by
Some little good, not in dreaming
Of great things to do by and by."

CHAPTER VIII
COMPROMISE

If we will think of it, no time need have gone to ruin, could it have found a man great enough; wisdom to discern truly what the time wanted, valor to lead it on the right road thither—these are the salvation of any Time.—*Thomas Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

CHAPTER VIII

COMPROMISE

TEXT: "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."—*Matthew 4. 9.*

THE opportunity and the demand for compromise come to everyone who has an ideal. They came early to Jesus. He stood at the threshold of his career looking out upon a world which believed in the power of money and of political authority. In his own breast lay a deep conviction that mammon was the enemy of God and that the love of authority was the very antithesis of that spirit of humble service which alone could transform society. He wanted to win the world that he might redeem it. He felt that his mission was to be the Messiah of his people. How could he be the Messiah to a people who held him aloof? Hence the powerful suggestion that came to him as he debated his responsibility: "Be cautious and prudent. Compromise with the spirit of the age. Make terms with the priestly authorities. Accede to the opinions of people of importance. Win also the ears of the

masses by refraining from any assaults upon their idols." Following those counsels what could he not do? In return for a few concessions he would be the recognized Messiah and thus would sit in a place of tremendous power and influence.

"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus was not the first to hear such a subtle and alluring promise. Nor was he the last! This, many students believe, is a representative temptation which must have come to Jesus again and again. It is also the undying spirit of evil which in one incarnation or another knocks at the door of every pure and lofty mind. The more thoroughly one is committed to the realization of an ideal, the more persistently does this spirit lay siege to the soul. The clearer one's vision of what the world ought to be, the greater the distance between him and the world as it is and the more inexorable seems the necessity of bridging that distance by some concession. And the more one loves his world the more accessible is he to the appeal to pay any price, even to the surrender of some ideals if necessary, to lift the world to a plane of thought and feeling more nearly his own.

Some people are never tempted to compromise because they have nothing to compro-

mise. They are so much the color of the crowd around them that the crowd rates them as its own. They indulge in the same low humors, seek the same miserable goals, resort to the same sordid methods. And because their life is no challenge it remains unchallenged. Nobody ever asks them to come down, because they are already on the level. Nobody demands that they modify their message because they simply say what everybody else is saying. A preacher boasted the other day, "I have been preaching for years and no one ever came around after my sermon and challenged anything I ever said." Well, that was easily explained. He was an echo and no one questions an echo. Let that man be a voice once, an authentic voice, speaking in plain terms the Eternal Reality which stands over against the fleeting illusions of our vain lives, and his pulpit stairs will be crowded with counselors who will come to beg him for the sake of his influence to modulate his tones and to remember that the world cannot be remade over night. The temptation to compromise is not one that goes around, hat in hand, ringing every door bell. It is not even one that calls on all those listed in the church directories of the city. It is the special honor paid to the men and women in every walk of life whose

lives are a rebuke to the aims and practices of the day.

I

Let us hasten to recognize that some compromises are necessary. One modern writer defines true liberalism as "a willingness to compromise," as "idealism with a genius for the practical." Parson Campbell did not give unchristian advice to young David Balfour when he said, "Be soople, Davie, in things immaterial." Idealism to be effective must have a genius for the practical, a certain suppleness in things immaterial.

1. There is always room for debate and for adjustments when methods for the realization of the ideal are under consideration. Only the man who is omniscient dares refuse peremptorily to consider more than one plan when there are others that seek the same goal that he has in view. Lincoln was out to destroy slavery. "Slavery" (he said in one of his many utterances upon the subject) "is the violation of eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition; but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black, foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth." And in his Cooper Union speech he pointed out the folly of "groping about for some middle ground

between right and wrong." But he was in office two years before he signed the paper that "proclaimed liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof." And because of his delay, some thought he had turned traitor to his ideal. Horace Greeley attacked him in the New York Tribune. A deputation of Chicago ministers waited upon him and commanded him in the name of God to emancipate the slaves by Presidential edict. Why did he hesitate? Because he was not sure of the method that ought to be pursued to overtake what he was sure was the divine and final result. He wanted to save the Union if possible. If that collapsed, he felt that everything would be lost—there would be no real freedom for anybody, North or South. Some were bewildered by his assertion: "If I could save the Union by emancipating all the slaves, I would do so; if I could save it by emancipating none, I would do it; if I could save it by emancipating some and not others, I would do it, too." But he never lost sight of the goal—the ultimate extinction of slavery. He saw only that that goal might be reached by several paths. "If slavery could be shut up within a ring fence and marked as a wrong thing which the nation as a whole might tolerate but would not be a party to, emanci-

pation in the slave States would follow in the course of time."[1] Or, if the threat of secession were carried out and a war followed in which the armies of the North actually won control of the South, then the mere fiat of emancipation would usher in the day of freedom. At any rate, here in the soul of the Great Emancipator was a recognition that one must not be arbitrary as to the methods by which a great national ideal is to find consummation. And while never for a moment permitting a question as to the righteousness of that which he sought to achieve, so humble was he as he wrestled with the whole question of how to achieve it that he wrote: "I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any of them than by me and knew of a constitutional way he could be put in my place, he should have it." When one is dealing with methods and agencies, humility and toleration, the spirit of compromise, are always in order. One may be sure of principles; there is always room for debate about programs! Conscience pledges one to the "what"; sometimes it is only obstinacy that argues for a certain "how"!

[1]Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 127.

2. There is often a place for concessions as far as the *time* for the realization of an agreed scheme is concerned. Guy Emerson in *The New Frontier* says of Mr. Roosevelt: "If the suggested compromise involved a departure by one iota from what he believed to be fair and honest, the answer came with a suddenness and finality quicker than thought itself. He never had to debate such questions with his own soul. . . . [But] if compromise involved the question as to whether the right action should be taken to-day or postponed until to-morrow, whether the entire purpose to be gained should be pressed at once or part secured now and the remainder later, then he was ready to compromise."[1] A few minds reach their destination by fast express; the many travel by oxcarts! For the sake of the unanimity which is necessary to the largest success of any enterprise, *it is often wisdom to wait until the oxcarts all get in.*

3. There are many times when the issue at stake is not the right but *rights.* In a word, though we usually devoutly affirm that we are fighting a principle, we are often really stirred by some personal interest involved. One is justified in battling and dying for the right.

[1] Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

There is scarcely the same justification present when he is attempting to secure what he thinks are his rights in the matter. Arbitration is not only wisdom, it is morality in such cases. The man who says he has nothing to arbitrate is not a martyr risking everything for a cause: he is an arrant egotist, made purblind by a devastating selfishness. There are few *rights* that are not subject to serious modification without entailing any serious loss to society.

II

Recognizing, then, that there is a very large place for compromise in our dealings with our fellow men, it must be said, however, that, as with a powerful drug, there is need of great caution in the use of it. An overdose may be deadly. Too frequent usage renders the user an addict, a "dope," who loses all capacity for normal reaction and becomes an object of pity and of tears.

1. The spirit of compromise easily degenerates into cowardice. When one lays down his arms and takes a seat at the conference table, he finds the table so much pleasanter than the arena. There are no blows struck, no wounds suffered; no perils assail his life and reputation. It is so charming to be treated like a gentleman, to have friends in-

stead of enemies, to come away with a whole skin. The next time a conflict arises between the ideal within and the stubborn real without, the suggestion is sure to arise: "Why fight? Why not confer? You did not fare so badly the last time; nor did your cause. At least you are here, to-day, a contender for the right. You might have been a vanquished and discredited antagonist, your friends alienated, your influence destroyed, if you had been belligerent instead of shrewd and conciliatory." And so once again, under the allurements of memory and of plausible suggestion, he yields. Little by little the fighting spirit dies. The moment an antagonist appears on the horizon he raises the flag of truce. He confers! He surrenders that which he ought to defend. He succumbs to this blandishment and that, all the while betraying the most precious thing within his soul. Beginning as a genial conciliator, he ends by being a coward. He loses all power and disposition to stand up and give battle, to risk his money or his reputation or his life for a principle. In one of the great churches of America there is a man who ten years ago was a celebrated champion of certain great ideals. He has fought many a brave fight for a better order and he carries the scars of honor received on many a field of valor and

of glory. But of late his sword is sheathed and his voice is heard only in smooth and adroit counsel. The other day he met a younger man of the church who is now out on the battlefield where banners are lifted and bullets are flying in a conflict between the old and the new. Instead of the salute which one might have expected from one brave soldier to another there was deprecating gesture and fawning voice and oily words whose substance was: "It is folly to fight. The world, when we leave it, will be pretty much as we found it. Put up your sword, be good and get yours." What a spectacle! Standing there in the midst of a great metropolis, youth with the crusader's fire in his soul and the crusader's light in his eyes; age, having compromised so much that he had lost not only the impulse to fight but all faith in battle! The Sir Galahad of yesterday had become the Machiavelli of to-day, his courage supplanted by the cowardice which is the perilous aftermath of the habit of compromise.

2. Moral insight is almost certain to become blunted in one who is too ready to treat with difficult and dangerous situations. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God! Men see the divine factors in each question only when their hearts are purged of all self-

interest, all concern for their own safety and prosperity. A vision clouded by personal considerations can never behold the real inwardness of any issue. Truth is always the pearl of great price, to purchase which a man must be willing to sell all that he has. It is the discovery which can be made only by one who can forget every other distraction, who has eyes for it alone. Flaubert said: "The poet is for me a priest; as soon as he puts on the priestly garment he should quit his family forever."[1] He was only affirming in those startling words that he who would penetrate the secrets of life must count no cost and permit no rivalry in his affections.

Now, this is just the peril of compromise—it gets men to thinking of something else than the will of God. They cease being priests and become politicians. Though they begin with all sincerity and loyalty to truth, other considerations begin to appear. Sly insinuations of a course more pleasant and profitable than rigid adherence to truth slip into the background of the conscious thinking and begin to make their deadly appeal to instinct and emotion. A fog of doubt is raised by cross currents from the hot zone of the ideal and

[1] Gamaliel Bradford, *Bare Souls*. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

the cold zone of the practical. And it often happens that the man who went into a conference with the determination to stand by the truth at all costs comes away completely befuddled as to what is the truth. A repetition of such experiences leads to a moral confusion that often chooses the evil when it means the good.

I know one brilliant man who prides himself on his genius for compromise. He came out of a conference the other day where he effected a *modus vivendi* between himself and a group whose views are at the opposite pole from his own. His complacent and self-congratulatory comment as he emerged in company with his friends was, "Well, I fooled them again." Fooled them? The fact is he has been fooling himself all the while. Unwilling to engage in struggle and to risk losing the support of certain powerful elements in the community, he has covered up his real meanings with adroit phrases and surrendered to opposing opinions until he has lost the power to see clearly on questions of gravest import. The habit of compromise lies next door to a moral confusion which can be escaped only by one who flatly refuses to enter into conferences which propose to debate the validity or urgency of his deepest convictions of right. The line between the material and the immaterial in

moral matters is difficult to draw, and many who attempt it end only in the surrender of that which is vital to the highest life for themselves and the world. Many careers, respected and honored, have, nevertheless, been shorn of all real spiritual power because of a few compromises which they believed to be secret but which so blunted the edge of a sensitive conscience that thereafter in a thousand issues they missed the elusive but important choice which would have brought moral and spiritual reality into operation in their lives.

3. Compromise often results in the indefinite postponement of the ideal. One is advised that his hour has not yet come and is counseled to keep his dream hidden away in his heart until a more favorable opportunity shall arise for declaring it to the world. Perhaps there are times when that counsel is wise. It may be true that the vision sometimes born in the soul of a prophet is so much more brilliant than any at which his contemporaries have looked that it will dazzle and blind their unaccustomed eyes instead of providing them with light to walk by. Jesus said that was true of some things he kept shut up in his soul. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

But that does not often happen. What the

world is suffering from, for the most part, is not excessive light but dense darkness. And if the rays of heaven have shone into the heart of any man, it is his business to let those rays shine through, that the shadows which afflict the souls of other men may be driven away. If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness! And that is what happens to light not permitted to shine out—it is snuffed out! The man who has a dream and stifles it, finds it becoming more and more unreal; finds himself more and more unwilling to sponsor it; finds it easier and easier to postpone doing anything about it, until the time arrives when it seems utterly untimely and he dismisses it as Felix dismissed Paul, "Go thy way . . . when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The end of the chapter is now as then—the more convenient season never arrives!

Olive Schreiner, in her book of *Dreams*, has a beautiful allegory of a mother and her child. The mother is approached by one after another who beg the privilege of touching the child and conferring upon him their choicest gifts. One says, "I am Health; whom I touch will have always red blood dancing in his veins; he will not know weariness or pain; his life will be a long laugh to him."

"No," said another, "let me touch, for I am Wealth! If I touch him, material care shall not feed on him. And what his eye lusts for his hand will have."

Another said, "Let me touch him, I am Fame. The man I touch I lead to a high hill where all men may see him; when he dies he is not forgotten. His name rings down the centuries; each echoes it on to his fellows."

Another said, "Let me touch the child, for I am Love. If I touch him, he shall not walk through life alone. In the greatest dark, when he puts out his hand, he shall find another hand by it. When the world is against him, another shall say, 'You and I.' "

Another pressed close and said, "Let me touch, for I am Talent. I touch the soldier, the statesman, the thinker, and the politician, who succeed; and the writer who is never before his time and never behind it. If I touch the child, he shall not weep for failure."

Finally one came with deep-lined face, but with a mouth smiling quiveringly. He could promise neither health, nor wealth, nor fame, nor love, nor success, but this only: "This shall be thy reward, that the ideal shall be real to thee."

No greater boon could be granted any life. That the ideal should be forever real! "I was

not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," cried Paul. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," said Jesus, "him only shalt thou serve." Can we go beyond that? Dare we pause this side of it?

CHAPTER IX

SYMBOLS

If you were brave, if you were kind, if you had faith sufficient,
If you believed the things you say, and died to make them true,

I should not need to come again returning and returning
Through all the lonely centuries and Golgothas for you.

Willard Wattles.[1]

The Lamb stands for sacrifice . . . not self wastage . . . certainly not mere good nature. It is, first of all, self surrender—a self offering not to man but to God. . . . The man who has dedicated body and soul to God is instinct with a new self-respect. He refuses to let himself be "melted down for the tallow trade." His love for men is too deep to make him popular. He sees man in God and gives himself freely, not for men's whims and pleasures, but for the redemption of their true manhood.—*E. Herman.*

[1] "Have I Been So Long Time With You," by permission of the author.

CHAPTER IX

SYMBOLS

TEXT: "Was it in Paul's name that you were baptized?"—*1 Corinthians 1. 13* (Moffatt).

"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."—*1 Corinthians 11. 28.*

SYMBOLS are indispensable. We cannot carry on a conversation, even, without them. The one definition which some of us remember from Harvey's English Grammar is that which assured us that a word is the sign of an idea. That is all that it is—a mere sign. When we see deaf persons communicating with each other, we are impressed with the symbolism of the play of hands and fingers and recognize that there is seldom any intrinsic relation between the motion and the idea or feeling which it is intended to convey. But we easily forget that various sounds which we call words and which we use every day are equally arbitrary and unrelated. There is no inherent reason why the American lover should use the words, "I love you," in his courtship. The German does not; he says, "Ich liebe dich;" and the Frenchman says, "Je t'aime," and the Kechua

of South America utters something that sounds like a cross between a hiccough and a sneeze. And all these sounds are the result of centuries of experience through which they became gradually accepted among certain peoples as the symbol of that mixture of exquisite pain and excruciating joy which takes possession of a young man's heart when his eyes at last rest upon the fairest among ten thousand. And that is the history and the usage of all our words, great and small—they are mere signs. It is impossible for any of us to convey directly to any of the rest of us any feeling or idea. We must always resort to some symbol which will suggest to the other person the thought or the emotion which has seized us, hoping that such suggestion will be the occasion of similar movements of thought and feeling in them.

We have invented and developed a vast symbolism in every department of life. Business is carried on by means of checks and mortgages and securities and other kinds of paper which are in themselves only inexpensive bits of wood pulp but which are the accepted and accredited index of values given and received. Government lives by emblems. The King of England would be a useless and very expensive appendage of British society did he

not serve as an emblem of empire, conveying to British millions, as they think nothing else could, the idea of unity and awakening emotions of solidarity and loyalty. We Americans, however much we admire the domestic virtues of King George, do not appreciate the need or value of the figure of a hereditary monarch. But we have our own symbols upon which we depend quite as slavishly. Our flag, beautiful as it is when floating from the mast of some graceful queen of the sea or when whipped in the breezes and kissed by the brilliant sunlight that plays upon some institution of mercy, is not America; it is only a combination of fabric and cloth which has been arbitrarily chosen to convey to our children some of the ideas that stirred in the minds and some of the passions that beat in the hearts of men who made a home in this vast wilderness, endured the horrors of winter hunger in Valley Forge, wrestled at Gettysburg for three days with death and disunion, and in little hamlets and in big cities all over our broad domain begot a nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Our public ceremonies, our courts, our city halls, our assemblies would be almost puerile save as tokens of a vast reservoir of social emotions out of which government draws the

very sustenance of its life. The world of education has its own precise, but to the uninitiated bewildering symbolism. Its maps and formulas and its phrases are never like the reality—they are only agreed tokens. And there is all its vast show on commencement day, its caps and its tassels and its gowns and its hoods and its diplomas and its degrees. They are nothing in themselves. When the graduate receives a sheepskin (that is only paper) and shifts his tassel from one side of his rented "mortar board" to the other, he has not done anything to himself or to the world. These are only gestures to convey an idea of an idea; but because of that, they have their value both to the graduate and to the spectator.

I

It is not to be wondered, in a world where we are so dependent upon symbols, that religion should have evolved a rich and beautiful symbolism of its own. Because it deals with the infinite and the ineffable and is the unique response of the unseen spirit of the individual to the equally unseen Spirit Divine, religion is especially dependent upon gestures and terms which can never utter but only indicate its reality. In two aspects of religion its dependence is complete.

(*a*) The first is in regard to the being and character of God. Here is One concerning whom none of our usual predicates apply and to whom none of our familiar adjectives belong. We have ventured to believe that we are made in his image and yet we dare not believe that he is subject to our limitations. So we invent terms that we have never used concerning any being that has appeared on the plain of history. We call him omnipresent, though our physics assures us that no person can be in two places at the same time. We have said that he is omniscient, yet our assertion conflicts with our conception of space and time. We have declared him omnipotent in the face of the catastrophes and evils which seem to indicate impotence rather than omnipotence; and especially in contradiction of the doctrine of man's free will. We have stubbornly asserted his infinite goodness in the face of the questions raised by the woes of life; his infinite peace at the same time that we declare his heartbreak over human sin. We have unblushingly resorted to endless anthropomorphisms as we have described his personality, all the time confessing that our descriptions and definitions do not fit. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God is.

If we are sober and intelligent, we recognize that all our doctrines and theologies, our creeds and our hymns are but symbols, attempts to express the inexpressible, to utter the unutterable, to convey that which is even inconceivable. If we have analyzed our experience correctly, we must admit that there never was a name or a phrase applied to God that was any more than a mere token of that awe, that fascination, that sense of the terrible sublime which was ours in those sacred moments when the veil of the flesh seemed to be torn aside and we felt ourselves in immediate contact with Infinite Reality. The Hebrew use of the term "Elohim" for God, a term which really means "Gods," and by a people who believe in one God only, is, says Rudolf Otto, only an indication of the sense of hopelessness which possessed great religious souls of long ago when they tried to express their feelings about God and their recognition that any term which they might use would only be a sign or an index having about as little likeness to reality as the formula TNT has to the amazing forces pent up in that compound. In his straining after symbols, John, the great mystic of the early church, multiplied expressions, Light, Life, Love, Logos, in an almost passionate effort to say to us what cannot be said.

(*b*) The second aspect of religion where symbols are in such demand is in the effort to describe the methods of communion with and the appropriation of the life of God. In all the great religious experiences of the race God has been presented to the consciousness not as some one transcendent, with whom there may be in high moments a thrilling contact, but as one who says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." All over the world there are records of men and women whose relation with God has been one of experience and seizure by him, an experience in which God wholly or partially enters and dwells and assimilates the believer to the divine nature, after a process of cleansing and rebirth. Here again philosophic description will not do. No one has ever been able to put such an experience into scientific terminology. Even the symbolism of words fails, and so men have devised rites and ceremonies and sacraments and liturgies in an effort to indicate to men by hints and suggestions what must otherwise remain forever hidden, that God does not stand apart and outside of human life but can become an abiding guest, making our life his life. What is Christian baptism?

Not a bit of magic, but a token. It doth represent to us "that inward purity which disposeth us to follow Christ." Or, as Paul put it, "We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." What is the service of the Lord's Supper—a memorial of Calvary? Yes, but very much more. Turn to those passages in the New Testament where Jesus is represented as speaking: "This is my body which is given for you. . . . This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Then turn to the communion ritual where we pray: "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may live and grow thereby; and that being washed in his most precious blood, we may evermore dwell in him and he in us."

In neither case do we have a scientific or theological statement, though some generations have foolishly tried to make it so. But here, again, is an effort to convey to the beholder what cannot be put in the exact terms of science, but what great religious souls have experienced through all the ages, namely, that God can be appropriated, that the Divine life can be participated in. Where mere words

fail, and must always fail, these emblems and tokens, these bits of sacred pageantry, of religious drama, succeed, by their suggestion, in conveying to men and women a sense of the need and the possibility of the new life and the great fact that that life must be in God. The Quakers have attempted to dispense with symbols, but in their quiet meetings where men and women assemble and sit together in reverent silence, they have invented a symbolism of their own which conveys to the onlooker and to the participant one of the most strategic and solemn truths of religious experience—that God is in the silences, that quiet is the atmosphere in which the Divine has his greatest opportunity with the soul of man.

II

But symbols have their perils as well as their values. Paul discovered this fact in dealing with the observance of communion in the churches which he founded and he had to rebuke some for turning the Lord's table into a Bacchanalian revel. Others made of baptism a means of attachment to a human leader rather than a symbol of cleansing by God. So in his Corinthian letter he records his gladness at least that he has not done any baptizing and expresses his conviction that his

mission is not with ritual but with prophecy. Symbols of all sorts, like all good things, are liable to perversion and too easily degenerate into a snare.

1. There is a tendency to turn the symbol of reality into a diagram of reality. Much of the dissension that has greatly disturbed the church during the last decade has arisen out of the assumption on the part of some that our terms and phrases and creeds are a complete statement rather than a hint at the truth. Here is the second of our articles of religion:

> The Son, who was the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

That is a noble statement and is rightly cherished by the church. But, considered as a complete and final diagram of Jesus Christ, it is subject to arraignment. They who attempt to hold it as the absolute description of Christ, do him a real disservice and they shut

away from themselves the larger ministry which he might bring to them. What we have here is an effort on the part of the men of yesterday to convey in language symbols their overwhelming sense of the uniqueness of Jesus, a uniqueness which set him above every name that is named and awakened in them a consciousness that God was present in words and works which could be adequately characterized only as divine. But to us, with our enlarged view of life and history, their symbols seem utterly inadequate. They are like a map which I saw a few months ago. It was of the world as the men of the Middle Ages conceived it. It stood for a reality which none of us would deny but no one would call it a satisfactory diagram of the real world and no one would attempt to find his way about with its aid or confine his journeyings to territories which it revealed. America was not on it at all, and, for millions of us a world without America would be a sorry place in which to live. So we regard that map as only a symbol of a reality larger than the map-makers knew. And that is what this second article of religion is. As a complete diagram it is insufficient. No one can explore all of Jesus with its aid. To call it the final expression of truth about Jesus and to tell men that they must confine

their thinking to it is only to anger them, because already they know that it is incomplete and that it does not do justice to the reality; that it omits great continents of wealth that are in him; that it is a faulty guide for him who wishes to know the truth as it is in Jesus. What I am pleading for is not a lesser Christ but a larger one; and the ever-present necessity for such a plea roots in the ever-present tendency to take what may be only a poor symbol and make it a complete and final description. And what is true in our phrases and definitions as applied to Jesus Christ is true of every other use of language in the precincts of religion. Whether we are describing God or prayer or our conceptions of what happened on Calvary or our idea of the future life, our descriptions, once made, tend to petrify and forever after confine our souls to their narrow, hard, inelastic outlines. We may well beware of anybody who attempts to force upon us a map of reality. If he does, we may be sure that he is either a chump or a charlatan. He either does not know the infinitudes of that with which he is dealing or he is deliberately trying to shut us out of the great open spaces of religion in order that he may prey upon our misery.

2. The second danger in the use of symbols

is that men shall grasp the symbol instead of the reality. That danger is everywhere present. Men salute the flag and, even as a notorious crowd of college students, have their pictures taken kneeling in a group and kissing the flag; and then go right out to demonstrations of intolerance and to denials of free speech that are the very antithesis of that for which the flag stands. Judges sit on the bench and speak great and swelling words about the *honor* of the court as a symbol of justice and of the rights of humanity and then turn about and proceed to make the court *contemptible* as they take away the rights of humanity by punishing anybody who dares criticize their conduct. So serious has become the situation that a former editor of the Boston *Globe* has just recently said, "As things stand now, almost all the criticism of a court in the newspapers, public speeches, pamphlets, or otherwise may cause the critic, though he be speaking in behalf of public rights and against indefensible abuses, to be thrown into jail."

It is not to be wondered that this tendency to grasp the symbol and miss the reality should invade the realm of religion. Here, as a single example, is the reality that lies behind Calvary, a reality which we have symbolized by our doctrine of the atonement and by a solemn

sacrament. How many have never reached beyond the symbol? Here are Catholics pinning their faith to some miracle of transubstantiation whereby the tokens of bread and wine are changed into the actual body and blood of Jesus, and assuming that by the process of physical assimilation they are actually taking in the life of God. And here are we, Protestants, priding ourselves that we have escaped such bondage to material notions of deity and yet in our own blindness making the sacrament the symbol of a symbol only, a poetic drama which we can watch without taking part in it, without really making any decisions or assuming any responsibility; and even while we watch it, quarreling about our interpretation of the atonement, insisting that Jesus is a substitute for us or that he could not be a substitute; that he died for our sins or that he was only an example to us sinners. The reality of Calvary has never and can never be summed up in a creedal statement or exhausted in the consumption of bread and wine at a communion table. It is something which lies too deep for words, something transcending all magic and all pageantry. It is a witness that between us and God there is such a moral distance as can be bridged only when God moves toward us in love and in grace;

that such a movement cannot be made without infinite cost to God and that we must go out to meet him as he moves toward us; and, since the distance we must cover is one created by our sins, that we must die to sin; and therefore that the coming together of God and man is one which waits upon God's costly initiative and also upon man's willingness to pay the price of a cross. It is all that and very much more.

What a pity that we stubbornly cling to a statement or regularly go to a sacrament but never feel the awe of God's movement toward us or sense the summons to crucify self in order that we may leave the old, unworthy hulk behind us and move with a light and free step toward God. And what pity that we have never sensed that other phase of reality, Jesus' death upon the cross as a revelation of the price which must always be paid for human redemption, and that we remain *spectators* rather than *sharers* of Calvary. One recalls the career of a Wilberforce, branded and exiled from among his peers because of his efforts to emancipate slaves in the British Empire; his reputation broken by traders in the House; his cup of agony brimming with the bitterness poured into it by slavers and their friends who profited by raids upon the Ivory coast; literally

nailed to a cross of emancipation ere the day of victory and freedom dawned upon the empire. *He grasped the reality!* Thousands of others in his day marched to cathedrals and listened to sermons on Calvary and participated regularly in the holy communion, but never even dreamed that there was any cross for them to bear in connection with the redemption of the black man or the white man.

CHAPTER X

THE LOST CHORD

The man who accepts truth on the authority of any other man, or even of the church, "has no more escaped from doubt than you have escaped the rain when you have crept under the umbrella of some other man who for the moment is going your way but who at any moment may turn aside and whose umbrella is not big enough for two. . . . It is this directness of relationship to God, it is this appeal of the life directly to him, it is this certainty that no authority on earth is so sacred but that every soul may judge of its teaching by its own God-given faculty, enlightened and purified by devout consecration to God, which makes the true experience of faith."—*Phillips Brooks.*

CHAPTER X

THE LOST CHORD

TEXT: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."—*Revelation 2. 4.*

MOST of us have repeated if we have not tried to sing the familiar lines that tell of an organist fingering idly the keys of his instrument and by strange chance evoking one chord of music that thrilled him through and through.

> "It linked all perplexed meanings
> Into one perfect peace
> And trembled away into silence
> As though it were loath to cease."

But it did cease and ever since the musician has been seeking vainly

> "For the one lost chord divine
> That came from the soul of the organ
> And entered into mine."

We have all had such divine moments, when our pains and our perplexities, our fears and our frustrations, our dangers and our disillusionments seemed to be gathered up into a chord of imperishable meaning; when life poured

itself into our souls as a heavenly symphony and we were thrilled through and through with a glorious faith and courage that made us strong to dare and to suffer. Sometimes those moments have been prolonged into days and weeks and they have always been seasons of great achievements. Our minds have been keen in analysis and brilliant in synthesis. Our hearts have been bold in execution. Our speech has been clothed with power. Like the hero of the first psalm we have brought forth our fruit in season, our leaf has not withered, and whatsoever we have done has prospered. Then something has happened. Like organ music trembling away into silence and vanishing amid the echoing arches of some awesome cathedral, so has the heavenly harmony of life escaped us and left us seated at the instrument which we are set to play but before whose keyboard we sit, helpless, groping in vain for that one lost chord divine that came from the great Oversoul of the universe and revealed to us how glorious a thing life might be and how poor have been all the painful fingerings with which we in our unaided weakness have sought to evoke a worthy music.

The thing which we sometimes have failed to remember is that similar experiences happen to social groups, that ever and anon there

swells forth from those institutions, which are the instruments of group expression, some new strain so splendid and thrilling that it seems as if the Great Musician had quietly seated himself at the bench and had swept the keys with celestial fingers in one ravishing master stroke, the ecstasy of which lifted the race to new deeds of glory and left with the ages an enchanting memory. Greece of the fifth century produced some of the "noblest poetry and art, the finest political thinking, the most vital philosophy known to the world." "If you dig at any classical or subclassical site in the Greek world," says Gilbert Murray, "however unimportant historically, practically every object you find will be beautiful. The wall itself will be beautiful, the inscriptions will be beautifully cut; the figurines, however cheap and simple, may have some intentional grotesques among them, but the rest will have a special truthfulness and grace; the vases will be of good shapes and the patterns will be beautiful patterns. If you happen to dig in a burying place and come across some epitaphs of the dead, they will practically all have about them this inexplicable touch of beauty."[1] If one has any doubt that the period which intervened between the birth of Pericles and

[1] *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 8.

the death of Aristotle is in many respects the most memorable in the history of the world, he has only to read *The Legacy of Greece*, a symposium by some of the most brilliant minds in modern England, to have his doubt subdued by faith and transformed into wonder. From that mean little peninsula by the Mediterranean arose a melody of truth and beauty in a Phidias and a Plato and an Æschylus and then died away as strangely as it came to birth. We have never been able to reproduce it. It seems as if only in heaven we shall hear again the grand Amen of the spirit that created such literature and such art.

Illustrations could be multiplied. In other ages and other climes life gave us a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Luther, a Lincoln and then relapsed into a silence that left the world wistful and lonely. We know they can never be repeated. To attempt to imitate them or recreate the conditions that gave them birth would be like trying to recapture the lost chord again. Men can be taught to play music once composed and set down in symbol on the lines of the staff, but only with God is the power to create composers. Institutes may devise standard methods of instruction for boys and girls who want to interpret Beethoven, but it is forever beyond them to

standardize the process for making Beethovens.

But these heavenly moments in the life of the individual and of the race are not given to us to tantalize us with their vanishing glory. They come not only to reprove our petty standards and the pitiful achievements with which we are so easily content, but also to give us true tones with which we may correct our dulled ears and limping melodies and to inspire in us diviner offerings to the symphony of life. One cannot be a Homer or a Phidias, but, as Matthew Arnold once said, "As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer or Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it with the help of the Bible." We cannot repeat, we ought not to try to imitate. But we can impart to our own creations to-day and to-morrow a vividness, a beauty, a power which would not otherwise be possible, if we keep in memory the lost chords of the Yesterdays in our own life and the life of the race; if we live with them, analyze them, seek to correct and inform ourselves by their eternal meanings.

Christianity has had its great moments.

It began with the sublimest chord that ever fell upon the ears and the hearts of men—

> "A name that charms our fears,
> And bids our sorrows cease;
> 'Tis music in the sinner's ears
> And life and health and peace."

It swelled out once and again in the lofty strains of the Reformation and the Methodist Revival. No one can read history with an unprejudiced eye and fail to see evidences of effects of these "notes almost divine" upon the life of their own and succeeding centuries. The music which broke forth from the lips of John and Charles Wesley so charmed the people of England that London escaped the passions that filled the streets of Paris with putrifying corpses, made her gutters run red with tides of blood and overwhelmed her shops and factories with ruin. That music leaped across the waters of the Atlantic, awakened pioneer souls on the new continent, and in them went singing through the wilderness of colonial America, making a vital contribution to the New World Symphony which was being written and which had at least as fair a beginning as any national movement in history.

That music has ceased. Everywhere throughout my own church in America, there is a

vague sense of loss. In some quarters there is a consciousness of longing that is akin to pain. We sit dumbly at the instrument of the church, aware that the heavenly hosanna has died away, fumbling for the keys that will help us recapture it. The songs that we once heard at our altars are seldom heard now, even in our pews. We still mumble and drawl the hymns which are written for us, but the spontaneous outburst of music from souls who have caught from afar sweet, ineffable strains of the heavenly choir no longer stir our church and cottage prayer meetings or interrupt the stately and solemn ritual with which we seek to call into being the sacred emotions which once thrilled our congregations.

> "In vain we tune our formal songs,
> In vain we try to rise;
> Hosannas languish on our tongues
> And our devotion dies."

The spirit which inspired John Wesley to declare, "The world is my parish" and which prompted other generations to chant, "The whole wide world for Jesus," is difficult to discover in the Methodism of this generation. And the angels of Methodist benevolence, who a few years ago were sweeping their harps of gold with generous fingers and evoking the

ravishing strains of Centenary oratorios, have gradually suffered paralysis and the melodious strings, that once through Wesley's Hall the soul of music shed, seem to lie broken and mute.

Here and there, of course, the old experiences and the old devotion still survive. God has not left even us without a witness. But it is betraying to the Philistines of Gath and Askelon and to the followers of H. L. Mencken no secrets when assertion is made that evangelical and missionary enthusiasm is, in wide areas of our church life, practically dead. No tears are being shed over the heathen in Pittsburgh or in Peking and few of our laity feel either great concern or great challenge in the presence of an unredeemed world. It has been a long, long time since many of us have been approached by members of our church with a petition or a subscription which indicated any resurgence of the spirit that used to hold all-day prayer meetings for the sake of a spiritual revival or that mortgaged its future to send a Bible woman out to tell the story of Jesus in the zenanas of India.

I am not arguing for a fact. I am merely stating what is too painfully apparent to need argument. Many who confess their grief at the present situation deal with it as a prob-

lem in mechanics. At the Annual Meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions one man raised a cry for "new devices." He cited the enthusiasm stirred at a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society meeting by an Indian shawl, and seemed to feel that, if we could find a shawl or a cloak that had a history or invent a new slogan or concoct a new style propaganda, our slump would soon be a memory. He is not by any means a lonely spirit. I have listened wearily through one hour after another in board and committee sessions where the only problem seemed to be the raising of a new commission or the invention of a new name for an old one; the designation of a special offering, or a special day, or a special month, which in itself would bring the cause of world evangelism home to the hearts of the people; the change of the fiscal year, as if changing the solicitation of subscriptions from October to May would alter the attitude of the people toward the thing subscribed to; and so on *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. And even the enterprise of home evangelism has been studied under the aspect of a mechanical problem. The substitutions of cards for the altar, of individual salesmanship for the public appeal, of supper meetings for prayer meetings have all been offered as guarantees of community salva-

tion and of growth in church membership and of the establishment of the kingdom of God in our midst.

I have come here to-day to deny that our problem is chiefly the discovery of new devices of any kind for raising money or for raising the dead and to declare a deepening conviction that we are confronted primarily with a problem of spiritual dynamics. What the church needs is not a new system but a new soul, not better devices but nobler dedications, not a more convincing propaganda but a more arresting power. A quickened heart and quickened step will come not by jazzing the tempo and the harmony of her official pronouncements but by hearkening once again to the music of her Lost Chord. That Chord we cannot hope to repeat. But, if we will only listen, we shall discover again some fundamental notes which may be recaptured and set in a new chord of glory with which we can march out singing to battlefields of the twentieth century and to new conquests for Christ.

This new chord will be faith—a faith in Christ. That seems such a commonplace that I am afraid you will go to sleep before you will give me a chance to define and illustrate. But it is not a commonplace. It never will be, in time or in eternity. It has been the dynamic

of every great achievement in the life of the church of yesterday and without it there will be no conquests to-day or to-morrow. I do not mean merely a faith *about* Christ. The most bitter and uncompromising foes we have right now in our humble efforts to apply the teachings of Christ to every phase of life are men who are positively unctuous in their assertions about Christ. They want preachers who accept in toto, commas and all, the second of the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but they do not want preachers who believe that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," or when he laid low the profit motive in his searching pronouncements: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Our friends, the enemy, believe a lot of things *about* Jesus Christ but they do not believe *in* Jesus Christ. The faith which is dynamic is a faith in Christ—a conviction that nobody gets along well in America or in Abyssinia without Christ; that no institution can endure either on the Ganges or on the Monongahela if it does not square with the principles of Christ; that the individual and society alike can really live only

as Christ is their life, his word their creed, his cross their law; that unless we can Christianize every relationship in life, we invite catastrophe; that unswerving loyalty to all that he was and is is the one inescapable duty, the one inalienable right and the one immortal opportunity of humanity.

This was the faith which stirred the fathers to action in triumphant yesterdays. They believed that men were lost without Christ. Mr. Edward White, in his *Life In Christ*, says, "In the opinion of Doctor Carey and those who first went with him to India, all the unregenerate of all ages were unsaved, and the unsaved of India, as of all lands, were destined to be delivered over, as Doctor Carey says in one of his letters, to endless misery." And what they thought about sinners away from home they thought about sinners at home. There was none other name given under heaven or among men whereby men could be saved. It was Christ or everlasting hell for them. It is not that in our estimation. We should shudder at if we did not curse a God who delivered men to everlasting torment because other men did not take to them the story of the redemptive life of Jesus. The only consignment to hell some of us are willing to make is that of the traditional hell and

the mediæval theology which took such comfort in it.

But in our revolt from the savagery of older notions of God we have failed to reach any deep persuasion about the necessity of God in Christ. The reason, for example, why American Christians are not enthusiastically and sacrificially supporting the mission to India is that they are not convinced that India needs a Christian mission. The cause of that lack of conviction I shall discuss in a moment. It is only to the point just now to recognize it as a fact. We are not in any great numbers or to any great degree impressed that any real tragedy will result here or hereafter if the India of our generation is not captivated by the Christ of our creeds and our sermons and our prayers. Nor do we have any deeper convictions about the poverty and peril of our fellow citizens at home who do not here find Christ. In a word, whatever we say about him and however much we eulogize him, he is not the Christ indispensable to our neighbors or to anybody else. He is an ornamental name in our religious literature; he is the object of many sentimental rhapsodies on and off the platform; he is an appealing figure of a remote century; he is a magic talisman which we append to prayer in the hope that

it will assure us health and prosperity; he is a clever arrangement whereby those who care to refer to him can secure immunity in their economic and social piracies. But he is not the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning without which there can be no end and the end without which there can be no beginning.

Unless somehow we can recover a faith in an Imperative Christ, all our efforts to arouse an evangelistic enthusiasm or to stimulate missionary giving will be as futile as an attempt to start a freight train across the Alleghanies by polishing the headlight or repainting the wheels on the engine. What the railroad must have is a steady fire under the boiler, and what the church must have is a constituency fired with unalterable convictions about the place of Christ in the life of the world.

I

That means, first of all, some sober thinking. We have done well to enter into appreciative studies of other faiths—to discover anew that God hath not left himself without a witness among any people, that this is a believing world, and that in India and China and in Africa the eager God has found responsive hearts and has revealed to them truths whose beauty and permanence we are bound

to recognize. But we have often failed in our study of comparative religions to make searching comparisons and we have failed even more seriously in communicating through pulpit and press the results of the comparisons we have made. In our effort to be kind to Leah we have neglected Rachel; in our praise of the Bhagavad Ghita we have been too restrained in our enthusiasm for the Sermon on the Mount. We have taken Christ out on the Indian Road and left him there while we have gone chasing after Gandhi or Tagore or some other noble incarnation of the brilliant philosophical mind of southern Asia. We have over advertised the unspoiled simplicity of the East and have forgotten and let our people forget the unspeakable squalors and miseries of millions who have not heard of the East's most famous son—Jesus. It is high time that we came down out of the clouds of romanticism about the unchristian world and faced the facts. No one could accuse Albert Schweitzer of mediævalism in any department of thinking, but this is his sober judgment expressed in his Selly Oak lectures: "As speculations about the world these Oriental religions are unassailable, . . . [but] the question on which ultimately the decisive judgment must be based is, whether a religion is truly and vitally ethical or not.

When it comes to this final test, the logical religions of the East fail. They strive for an ethic. They stretch out toward it in thought; but in the end they sink back exhausted."[1] The supremely ethical Christ is still without a rival. No other religion meets the fundamental need of human life as does his religion. As long as the race is what it is, he will be its only sufficient Saviour.

And with our revaluation of Christ's mission to the East there comes a like demand for a reappraisal of Western need of him. Our easy-going Universalism has almost or even quite persuaded many of our people that it matters little, after all, what men do with Jesus here. Somehow the thing will be fixed up. A leisurely God who has all eternity to achieve his purpose will ultimately bring all his sons to glory. Christ on Calvary is a graceful gesture made to attract the attention of those who will be attracted and to captivate those who will be captivated. But as for the rest, they'll wake up some time and arrive somehow. A few billion years will make little difference to them or to God, since both have unending years to dispose of and they might

[1] *Christianity and the Religions of the World,* Albert Schweitzer. Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc. Used by permission.

as well use some of it in arranging the spiritual toilet which they neglected here and thus find even eternity more interesting because there is more there to be done than if they had stepped into it in spiritual full dress. To some of us at least, such a notion does not square itself with the urgency everywhere evident in the exhortation of Jesus nor with our general philosophy. What reason to hope for a life after death for those who haven't developed even the beginnings of eternal life before death? And, if there could be some ghost survive the destruction of their biological mechanism, what hope that that empty ghost, having spurned the influences of grace here, will accept them hereafter? There are some who believe that now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation; that here on the basis of this biological mechanism is our only opportunity to achieve by the grace of God that quality of life which the death of the body cannot touch; that, unless such a life is achieved, the death of the body is the end of the story and, therefore, the cry sounds out with renewed emphasis, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." But, whatever one's attitude toward the issue between an inevitable and an achieved immortality, surely no sober view of life can abide the alarmingly prevalent im-

pression that Americans as well as pagans can get along pretty well without Christ, that in the long run it does not really matter very much whether we persuade our neighbors to give him a chance at them or not. Either Christ is the way, the truth, and the life or else Christianity is a solemn hoax which in these days of enlightenment ought to be laughed off the stage.

II

But, if faith in Christ is to be regained, there must be not only some earnest thinking but also some genuine personal discoveries of him in the hearts of our people. Men did not rush out to the mission fields of Africa or to the highways and hedges of colonial America merely because they were convinced that Christless souls were on their hurried way to a hopeless hell, but because they had found in Christ a peace, a joy, a victory, a companionship which they longed to share with others.

> "O that all might taste and see
> The riches of his grace;
> The arms of love that compass me
> Would all mankind embrace."

The conviction that no man could afford to live apart from Christ was not primarily logical but experiential. How could they doubt

the worth of One who had brought them such an investiture of the grace of God?

Need I recite the lack of evidence of such personal experience with Christ to-day? When has anybody sat down with you and recited with unmistakable tones of reality the story of Christ's personal significance to them? Or when, as you have preached about the great Companion, have you looked down upon your congregation and seen here and there the radiant face which assured you, if language had been given, there would have returned to you an echo of Maltbie D. Babcock's lines,

> "I envy not the twelve—
> Nearer to me is He.
> The life He once lived here on earth
> He lives again in me."[1]

The evangelistic and missionary listlessness of the church is not wholly or even largely the result of a lack of correct opinion about Christ. It is a lack of the sense of his ineffable worth growing out of personal experience of that worth. You have, every one, concluded ere this that I am about to make a plea for Christian mysticism. I am!

Mysticism has not an unblemished reputation. In certain quarters it is anathema. It

[1] Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

is denounced as the foe of rational and ethical living, the father of religious vagary, the last refuge of the pious scoundrel who wants to *feel* good without being at pains to *be* good. The writer knows the perils of the mystic emphasis and the wild extravagance into which mystic moods may betray the unwary. His teacher of philosophy in graduate school had two pet aversions, the Absolute in theology and the Mystic in religion. "The Absolute bakes no bread" was the contemptuous summary of the uselessness of that conception of the Infinite. But there was no summary sufficient to express his enormous dislike for mysticism in its characteristic manifestations in the history of religion, though he evidently relished the description of one mystic as a "pious tabby cat basking in the beams of uncreated light." No man could sit under such teaching for several years without being made acquainted with all the vices, great and small, that in any way and at any time have connected themselves, though ever so remotely, with those who claimed the mystic's experience of God.

Admitting the truth of many of these charges, one student at least retained a conviction, born of experience, that mysticism is a valuable asset to a good life. That conviction has deepened

as the pastorate of rural and city churches has given him opportunity to observe what may happen in the careers of those who have been touched by the mystic rapture and what does not happen where God and Christ are not met on the field of personal experience, but remain only a convenient x and y to help balance the theoretical equation of human existence.

The philosophy upon which mysticism rests is the philosophy of the best religious thinking of our time, a philosophy which brings God down out of the sky of transcendentalism and sets him in the midst of our terrestrial human activity. One of its best expressions is that most admirable book of Professor Beckwith, *The Idea of God:* "The being of God is not other than his will, and his will does not exist outside of a world of space and time and conscious beings. Nowhere is God more real and never will he be more active than in the immediate circle of our conscious life. If our experience is not in contact with his energizing activity here and now, we shall not elsewhere and at another time be in touch with it."[1] That is a statement made not in the interests of mysticism, but in the interests of sound thinking and by a man whose writing is widely acclaimed.

[1] C. A. Beckwith, *The Idea of God*, p. 314. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

To the Christian this is not a new idea. His theory has always been that the God revealed in Christ is here now, that he stands by the side of every soul battling with temptation, every heart bowed down with untellable grief, every preacher proclaiming truth, every social worker carrying a heavenly ministry into any-one of our numerous earthly hells, every crusader lifting the banner of righteousness in the presence of legions that seek to debauch the national conscience and destroy the national soul. We have always affirmed the presence of God. It is good to the troubled mind of these anxious and skeptical days to know that such an affirmation is not unreasonable.

But mysticism declares that such an affirmation may become a personal experience. If God is "in the immediate circle of our conscious life," then surely consciousness may become aware of him. Again I quote Professor Beckwith, who in another connection says, "Whatever mysticism is, it witnesses to an indestructible conviction that there is such an affinity between the soul of man and the ultimate reality of the world, that not by discursive thought but by an immediateness of consciousness the soul becomes aware of God or feels its oneness with him."[1] We assert

[1] *The Idea of God, Ibid.*, p. 53.

the nearness of God to every soul and the reasonableness of the expectation of the mystic experience.

Now, just what is the mystic experience? It is the realization, the finding real, in consciousness, of what is already a truth in idea. I know a preacher who frequently, as he sits in the pulpit waiting for the moment of prophecy, has such a vivid sense of the presence of Christ that he feels like falling upon his knees in adoration and wonder. And as he arises to preach, his soul is curiously swayed between a reluctance to break the spell of the unseen Presence and an eagerness to tell the congregation about the royal Friend whose messenger he is and who at that moment so consciously stands beside him, imparting a new reality to the message he has prepared. Unless our whole Christian philosophy is wrong, that preacher is right. The Christ-God is there. He is always there, even though his minister is not aware of him. Is there any reason why we should doubt the validity of the testimony of the ministerial consciousness that the one always there does succeed on certain occasions in conveying an indisputable sense of his presence? That minister is not a visionary. He is a student of history, philosophy, science. He is even an evolutionist.

He has the instruments of self-criticism and he uses them. But on certain Sunday mornings, in church or out in the spring woods, "amid the hush of nature newly born," or yonder where northern waters reflect the radiance of dying day, he knows that Someone is near who is more than the image of his own thinking, a Someone of whom he himself is but the image and yet with whom he is wondrously akin.

Nor is it preachers only who have such experiences. I quote from a letter from a beautiful and trusted family friend: "I had gone through that terrible zero hour when my soul recognized the meaning of standing alone, bleak, desolate. . . . As I knelt at the foot of the cross flood tides of love descended upon me from His outstretched arms. . . . Thought was liberated, for up to that time my thoughts ran round and round like blind mice in a cage. . . . The burden is lifted from duty. . . . The dishpan is still there, but I can see over the edge of it!"

Is it necessary to argue the value of such a realization of God? Dismiss the extravagant claims which have been made for it, ranging all the way from the elimination of the possibility of sin to the demonstration of the truth of debated points in theology. Saint Teresa

claimed in her Vision of the Trinity to have personal assurance of the validity of Trinitarian doctrine. No man among us believes Saint Teresa's analysis of her own experience. What really happened was that her realization of God was interpreted in terms of her own thinking. Had she been a Unitarian, she would have reported a Unitarian God. Mysticism is not a substitute for the most rigid thought, nor is it ever safe except under reason's watchful eye. Its contribution to life is not exploration but confirmation. That preacher of whom I have written did not learn any new or improved theory as the result of his raptures, but he did have a new and powerful passion put behind the proclamation of the theory which he already believed. It became no longer a mere conclusion of logic and history, but a convincing gospel and a maker of history in his own life and in the community in which he lived. That layman did not learn any new ethical conceptions in the hour of a realized Presence, but there was born a new zest which transformed duty into delight and made an external law an inner compulsion because it was seen to be love's way of serving one who in the quiet hour drew near with all the irresistible winsomeness of a perfect lover. And both of them finding Christ real and

precious are consumed with eagerness to share him with every child of the race. It is one man's conviction that until such experiences are generated on a large scale our attempts at evangelism and at the awakening of missionary enthusiasm will have only a spasmodic and indifferent success.

III

And, finally, there is no hope of a recovered and sustained enthusiasm for Christ save by obedience to him. The practical denial of Jesus in daily life soon corrodes and destroys any verbal confession of him and any conviction of his value for anybody else. When a man day after day repudiates the principles of Jesus in the conduct of his own affairs, it will not be long until his practical skepticism consumes whatever theoretical faith he has had in Jesus as a world Saviour. One cannot refuse to enthrone Jesus in his own life and continue to be very sacrificial in his effort to set him on the throne of the life of any other person. Right here is the finger laid upon the most diseased spot in the ecclesiastical anatomy. The church has too many business men who deny and ridicule the law of service; politicians who are in league with political

machines that scorn the moral and spiritual welfare of the community;

> "Heathen hearts that put their trust
> In reeking tube and iron shard;"

rich who do not at all believe in the policy of One who, though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich; common people who cherish envy and indulge in the covetousness which is anti-Christ, but who scarcely know the first meaning of prayer, which is the very heart of the Jesus way of life. The church itself says it believes in Christ and often by its very program gives the lie to its testimony—resorting to the arts of the showman, with publicity that is cheap and with stunts that are juvenile; demonstrating, by its frantic effort to provide a thrill to catch the passing multitude, its utter lack of confidence in the appeal of the unadorned Christ or in the spiritual laws which he trusted to build the Kingdom of God. And even we who are standing in the pulpit every Sunday summoning our people to trust and obey Christ have not yet found our own hearts ready to obey him by dismantling our worldly system of honors and rewards and rebuilding our ministerial connectionalism on the basis of mutual brotherhood, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

This is why there is a decadence of evangelistic and missionary enthusiasm. A concrete and stubborn practical disbelief in Christ has taken possession of us. In the face of a growing understanding of what Jesus taught and meant, there has been a growing refusal to surrender. We hesitate to risk our lives in the keeping of his holy will. Whatever we still say in praise of him, we are actually afraid of him. Our theological faith has become a domestic and economic and political and ecclesiastical unfaith. The only correction for such devastating disbelief is life. The people who practice Christ are enthusiastic about him. Arthur Nash once regarded the Golden Rule as a beautiful expression of impracticable idealism. But he put it into his business and after a half dozen years wrote, "After we put this divine law into operation in our factory, I felt that there was something sacred about our plant every time I entered it; now I know that is true. I realize we have evoked the highest law of God's universe." Practice had converted the skeptic into an apostle. Nothing less can recreate the apostolic fervor of Methodism.

And now abideth a revaluation of Christ in thought, a recovery of him in mystical experience, a daring surrender to him in practice—

these three. These are the dominant notes that must again be struck if the church which we love is to revive the swelling harmonies of the Lost Chord that once made her life sweeter than the notes of angels' song and that need to be heard again by a world filled with the angry din of selfish strife!

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